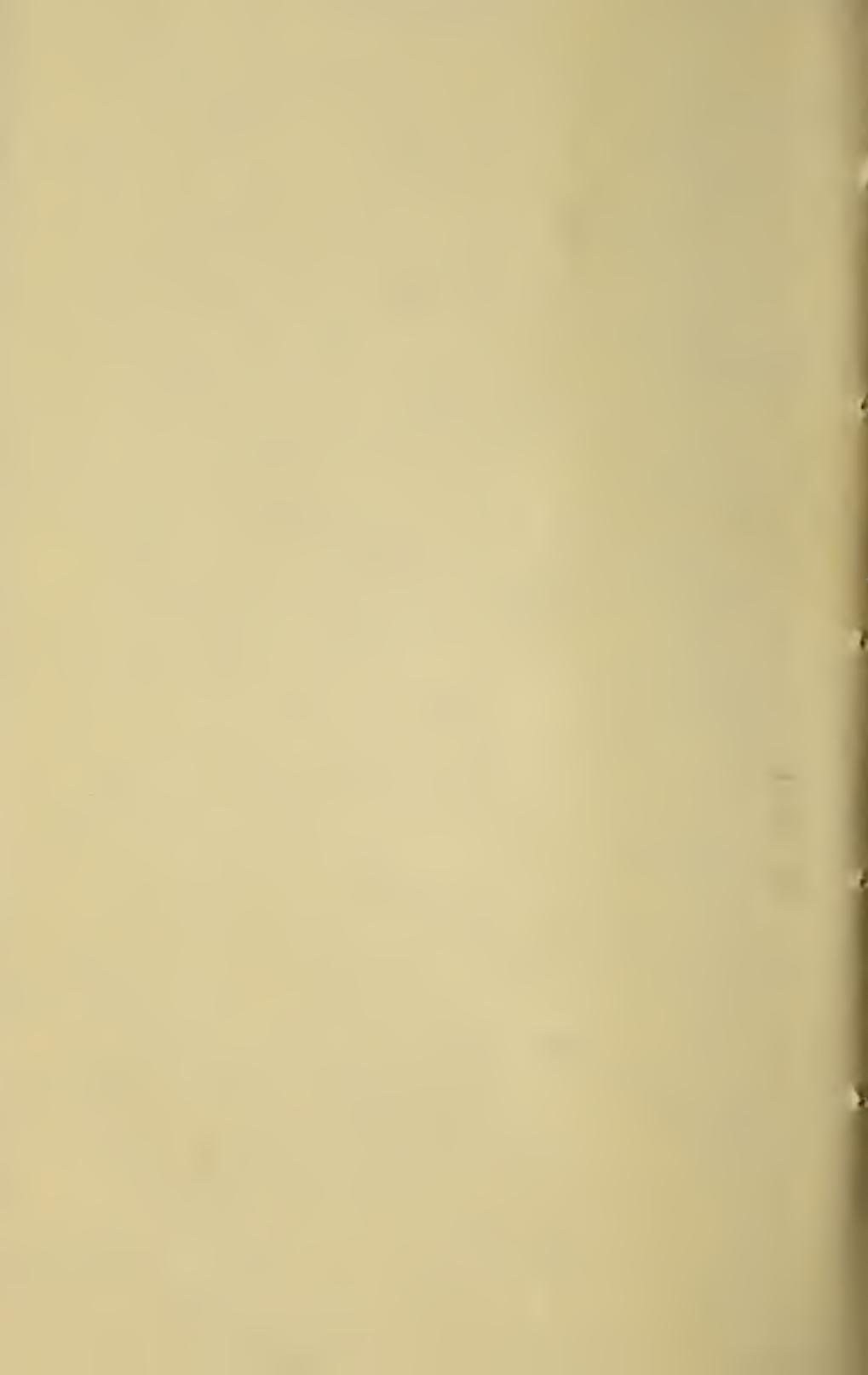
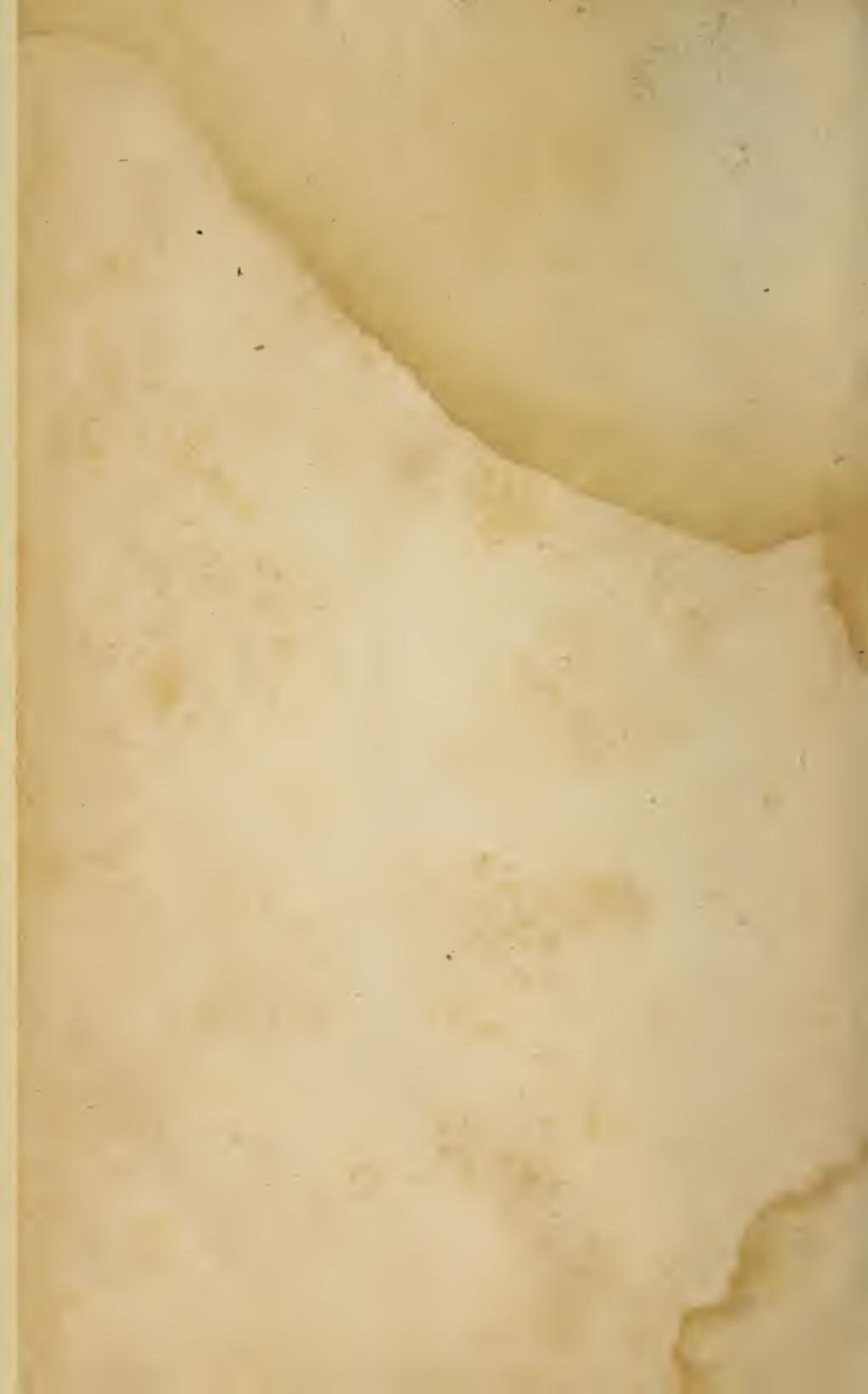


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THE SOLEMN
WARNINGS OF THE DEAD:

OR, AN
ADMONITION TO UNCONVERTED SINNERS.

BY MR. JOSEPH ALLEINE.

AND A

CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.

BY MR. RICHARD BAXTER.

He being dead yet speaketh.—HEBREWS xi, 4.

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Judge and Mrs. Isaac R. Hitt

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AN ADMONITION
TO
UNCONVERTED SINNERS;
In a Serious Treatise.

SHOWETH,

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| I. What conversion is not,
and correcting some mistakes
about it. | IV. The marks of the uncon-
verted. |
| II. What conversion is, and
wherein it consisteth. | V. The miseries of the uncon-
verted. |
| III. The necessity of conver-
sion. | VI. Directions for conver-
sion. |
| | VII. Motives for conversion. |

BY JOSEPH ALLEINE,
LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT TAUNTON,
IN SOMERSETSHIRE.

TO THE READER.

READER,—You are here presented with a book which was written many years before the name of Methodism was known in the world ; which it may be proper to remind you of, in order to remove any unreasonable prejudice arising from that quarter. What I would recommend to you is, to read it with attention, examination, and prayer, as the most effectual method you can take to render it a blessing to your own soul. The author seems to have made use of every possible argument to win upon your ingenuity, to awaken conscience, and to direct you in the way everlasting.

I charge you, as in the presence of the living God, now to do your part, and give it a faithful reading : I beg of you, by every endearing motive of love and affection to your precious and immortal soul, that you will look upon this book as calculated to promote your present and everlasting happiness ; and I beg of God that he would be pleased so to accompany your reading of it with his Divine and heavenly grace, as to afford you matter of thanksgiving, gratitude, and praise, to his holy name for ever and ever.

Man, by nature and practice, is a sinner before God ; a charge of guilt is fastened upon him ; this, in words, he readily acknowledges ; but being blinded with prejudice, and having wrong conceptions both of the nature of God and sin, he flatters himself that all will be well at last, and that a merciful God will not finally condemn him ; this lulls him asleep in Satan's arms, and makes him secure and easy under all the denunciations of God's wrath against him.

One grand design of the author in this book is, to dispel that gross darkness, to rectify those false conceptions he has of God and sin, and to convince him that notwithstanding all his vain pretensions, without true repentance the sentence of wrath stands in full force against him still.

Jesus Christ is set forth in Scripture as the Saviour of sinners, the helper of the helpless; the only sure bottom upon which man is to anchor the hope of eternal salvation. To this Lord and Saviour is the awakened sinner directed in this book: a free and a full salvation is offered him, under every possible assurance, that if he closes with it his sins shall be pardoned, his person and future services accepted: and, from being a brand of hell, he shall become an heir of glory.

Reader, the former character either is or has been thine own: if it is thine at this present reading, remember thy danger; take the alarm, and flee from the wrath to come. If it has been thine formerly, and thou art truly converted to God by Jesus Christ, give him all the glory, rejoice in the happy change, walk worthy of thy high calling, and thou art made for ever.

Thy ready servant in the LORD.

AN ADMONITION TO UNCONVERTED SINNERS.

*An earnest invitation to sinners to return to God,
in order to their eternal salvation.*

DEARLY beloved and longed-for, I gladly acknowledge myself a debtor to you all, and am concerned, as I would be found a good steward to the household of God, to give to every one his portion ; but the physician is most solicitous for those patients whose case is most doubtful and hazardous ; and the father's bowels are especially turned toward his dying child. The number of unconverted souls among you call for my most earnest compassion and hasty diligence to pluck them out of the burning, Jude 23. And therefore to these first I shall apply myself in these lines.

But whence shall I fetch my argument ? or how shall I choose my words ? Lord, wherewith shall I woo them ? wherewith shall I win them ? O that I could but tell ! I would write unto them in tears, I would weep out every argument, I would empty my veins for ink, I would petition them on my knees, verily (were I able) I would : O how thankful would I be if they would be prevailed with to repent and turn !

“ But, Lord, how insufficient am I for this work : I have been many a year wooing for thee, but the damsel would not go with me : Lord,

what a task hast thou set for me to do ! Alas ! wherewith shall I pierce the scales of leviathan, or make the heart to feel that's hard as stone, hard as a piece of nether millstone ! Shall I go and lay my mouth to the grave, and look when the dead will obey me and come forth ? Shall I make an oration to the rocks, or declaim to the mountains, and think to move them with arguments ? Shall I give the blind to see ? From the beginning of the world was it not heard that a man opened the eyes of the blind ; but thou, O Lord, canst pierce the scales and prick the heart of the sinner. I can but shoot at rovers, and draw the bow at a venture, but do thou direct the arrow between the joints of the harness, kill the sin, and save the soul of a sinner that casts his eyes on these labours."

Brethren, I beseech you suffer friendly plainness and freedom with you in your deepest concernments. I am not playing the orator, to make a learned speech to you, nor dressing my dish with eloquence wherewith to please you ; these lines are upon a weighty errand indeed, namely, to convince, and convert, and to save you. I am not baiting my hook with rhetoric, nor fishing for your applause, but for your souls. My work is not to please you, but to save you ; nor is my business with your fancies, but your hearts : if I have not your hearts I have nothing. If I were to please your ears I could sing another song ; if I were to preach myself I would steer another course ; I would then tell you a smoother tale ; I would make you pillows, and

speak you peace ; for how can Ahab love his Micaiah, that “ always prophesies evil concerning him ?” 1 Kings xxii, 8. But how much “ better are the wounds of a friend than the fair speeches of a harlot, who flattereth with her lips till the dart strike through the liver, and hunteth for the precious life ?” Prov. vii, 21–23, and vi, 16. If I were to quiet a crying infant, I might sing to him a pleasant song, and rock him asleep ! but when the child is fallen into the fire the parent takes another course, he will not go to still him with a song or a trifle. I know, if we speed not with you, you are lost ; if we cannot get your consent to “ arise and come away,” you perish for ever : no conversion and no salvation : I must get your good will, or leave you miserable.

But here the difficulty of my work again recurs upon me, “ Lord, choose my stones out of the brook,” 1 Sam. xvii, 40, 45. “ I come in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.” I come forth like the stripping David to wrestle, “ not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world,” Eph. vi, 12.— “ This day let the Lord smite the Philistines, and spoil the strong man of his armour, and give me to fetch off the captives out of his hand.” Lord, choose my words, choose my weapons for me ; and when I put my hand into the bag, and take thence a stone and sling it, do thou carry it to the mark and make it sink, not into the forehead, 1 Sam. xvii, 49, but the heart of the un-

converted sinner, and smite him to the ground, with Saul in his so happy fall, Acts ix, 5. Thou has sent me as Abraham did his servant, "to take a wife unto my Master, thy Son," Gen. xxiv, 4, but my discouraged soul is ready to fear the woman will not be willing to follow me ; "O Lord God of my Master, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness to my Master, and send thine angel before, and prosper my way, that I may take a wife unto thy Son," Gen. xxiv, 12, that as thy servant "rested not till he had brought Isaac and Rebekah together, so I may be successful to bring CHRIST and the souls of my people together before we part."

But I turn me unto you. Some of you do not know what I mean by *conversion*, and in vain shall I persuade you to that which you do not understand ; and therefore for your sakes I shall show *what this conversion is*. Others do cherish secret hopes of mercy, though they continue as they are ; and for them I must show the *necessity of conversion*. Others are like to harden themselves with a vain conceit that they are converted already ; unto them I must show the marks of the *unconverted*. Others, because they feel no harm, fear none, and so sleep on the top of the mast ; to them I shall show the miseries of the *unconverted*. Others sit still, because they see not their way out ; to them I shall show the *means of conversion*. And finally, for the quickening of all I shall close with the *motives of conversion*.

CHAPTER I.

*Showing in the negative what conversion is not,
and correcting some mistakes about it.*

LET the blind Samaritans worship they know not what, John iv, 22 ; let the heathen Athenians superscribe their altar, "Unto the unknown God," Acts xvii, 23 ; they that know man's constitution, and the nature of the human soul's operation, cannot but know that the understanding having the empire in the soul, he that will go rationally to work, must labour to let in the light here. Now, that I may cure the mistakes of some, who think they are converted when they are not, as well as remove the troubles and fears of others, that think they are not converted when they are ; I shall show you the nature of conversion, both negatively, or what it is not ; and positively, what it is.

We will begin with the negative.

1. "It is not the taking upon us the profession of Christianity." Doubtless Christianity is more than a name. If we will hear Paul, it lies not in word, but in power, 1 Cor. iv, 20.—If to cease to be Jews and pagans, and to put on the Christian profession had been true conversion, who better Christians than they of Sardis and Laodicea ? These were all Christians by profession, and had a name to live ; but because they had but a name, are condemned by Christ, and threatened to be spewed out, Rev. iii, 1-16. Are there not many that

mention the name of the Lord Jesus, and yet depart not from iniquity ? 2 Tim. ii, 19, and “ profess they know God, but in works they deny him ! ” Titus i, 16. And will God receive these for true converts, because turned to the Christian religion ? What ! converts from sin, when yet they do live in sin ? it is a visible contradiction. Surely if the lamp of profession would have served the turn, the foolish virgins had never been shut out, Matt. xxv, 12. We find not only professors, but professors of Christ, and wonder workers, turned off because evil workers, Matt. vii, 22, 23.

2. “ It is not the being washed in the laver of regeneration, or putting on the badge of Christ in baptism.” Many take the press money, and even wear the livery of Christ, that yet never stand to their colours, nor follow their leader. Ananias, and Sapphira, and Magus, were baptized as well as the rest.

Friends and brethren, “ Be not deceived, God is not mocked,” Gal: vi, 7. Whether it be your baptism, or whatever else that you pretend, I tell you from the living God, that if any of you be prayerless persons, or unclean, or malicious, or covetous, or riotous, or a scoffer, or a lover of evil company, Prov. xiii, 20 ; in a word, If you are not holy, strict, and self-denying Christians, Heb. xii, 14 ; Matt. xvi, 24, you cannot be saved, except you be transformed by a farther work upon you, and renewed again by repentance.

3. “ It lies not in a moral righteousness.”

This exceeds not the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, and therefore cannot bring us to the kingdom of God, Matt. v, 20. Paul, while unconverted, "touching the righteousness which is in the law, was blameless," Phil. iii, 6. None could say, "Black is thine eye." The self justiciary could say, "I am no extortioner, adulterer, unjust," &c. Luke xviii, 11. Thou must have something more than all this to show, or else, however thou mayest justify thyself, God will condemn thee. I condemn not morality, but warn you not to rest here: piety includes morality, as Christianity doth humanity, and grace reason; but we must not divide the tables.

4. "It consists not in an eternal conformity to the rules of piety." It is too manifest, men may have a form of godliness without the power, 2 Tim. iii, 5. Men may pray long, Matt. xxiii, 14, and fast often, Luke xviii, 12, and hear gladly, Mark vi, 2, and be very forward in the service of God, though costly and expensive, Isa. i, 11, and yet be strangers to *conversion*. They must have more to plead for themselves, than that they keep to their Church, give alms, and make use of prayer, to prove themselves sound converts. No outward service but a hypocrite may do it, even to the "giving all his goods to feed the poor, and his members to the fire," 1 Cor. xiii, 3.

5. "It lies not in the chaining up of corruption, by education, human laws, or the force of incumbent affliction." It is too common and

easy to mistake education for grace ; but if this were enough, who a better man than Jehoash ? While Jehoiada his uncle lived, he was very forward in God's service, and calls upon him to repair the house of the Lord, 2 Kings xii, 2, 7 ; but here was nothing more than good education all this while : for when his good tutor was taken out of the way, he appears to have been but a wolf chained up, and falls to idolatry.

6. In short, “ it consists not in illumination or conviction, not in a superficial change or partial reformation.” Felix may tremble under conviction, Acts xxiv, 25, and a Herod amend many things, Mark vi, 20. It is one thing to have sin alarmed only by convictions, and another to be captivated and crucified by converting grace. Many, because they had been troubled in conscience for their sins, think well of their case, miserably mistaking CONVICTION for CONVERSION : with these Cain might have passed for a convert, who ran up and down the world like a man distracted, under the rage of a guilty conscience, till with building and business he had worn it away, Gen. iv. 13, 14. Others think, that because they have given over their riotous courses, and are broken off from evil company, or some particular lust, and reduced to sobriety and civility, they are now no other than real converts ; forgetting that there is a vast difference between being sanctified and civilized : and that “ many seek to enter into the kingdom of heaven, Luke xiii, 24, and are not far from it,” Mark xii. 34, and

arrived to the *almost* of Christianity, Acts xxvi, 28, and yet fall short at last. While conscience holds the whip over them, many will pray, hear, read, and forbear their delightful sins : but no sooner is the lion asleep, than they are at their vomit again. Who more religious than the Jews, when God's hand was upon them, Psalm lxxviii, 34, 35 ; yet no sooner was the affliction over, but they forgot God, and showed their religion to be a fit, verses 36, 37. Thou mayest have disgorged a troublesome sin, that will not sit easy on thy stomach, and yet not have changed thy swinish nature all the while.

You may cast the lead out of the rude mass into the more comely proportion of a plant, and then into the shape of a beast, and thence into the form and features of a man, yet all the while it is but lead still : so a man may pass through divers transmutations, from ignorance to knowledge, from profaneness to civility, thence to a form of religion ; and all this while he is but carnal and unregenerate, while his nature remains unchanged.

APPLICATION. “ Hear then, O sinners, hear as you would live, so come and hear,” Isa. lv, 3. Why would you so willingly deceive yourselves, or build your hopes upon the sand ? I know he shall find hard work of it that goes to pluck away your hopes : it cannot but be ungrateful to you, and truly it is not pleasing to me. I set about it as a surgeon when to cut off a putrified member from his well-beloved friend, which of force he must do, though with an aching heart, a piti-

ful eye and a trembling hand. But understand me, brethren, I am only taking down the ruinous house (which will otherwise speedily fall of itself, and bury you in the rubbish) that I may build it fair, firm, and strong for ever. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish," Prov. xi, 7, if God be true to his word. And hadst not thou better, O sinner, to let the word convince thee now in time, and let go thy false and self-deluding hopes than have death too late to open thine eyes, and find thyself in hell before thou art aware? I should be a false and faithless shepherd, if I could not tell you, that you, who have built your hopes upon no better ground than these before mentioned, are yet in your sins. Let your conscience speak: what is it that you have to plead for yourselves? Is it that you bear Christ's livery? that you bear his name? that you are of the visible Church? that you have knowledge in the points of religion, are civilized, perform religious duties, are just in your dealings, have been troubled in conscience for your sins? I tell you from the Lord, these pleas will never be accepted at God's bar; all this, though good in itself, will not prove you converted, and so will not suffice to your salvation. O! look about you, and bethink yourselves of returning speedily and soundly. Set to praying, and to reading, and studying your own hearts: rest not till God hath made thorough work with you; for ye must be other men, or else are lost men.

But if these be short of conversion, what shall

I say of the profane sinner ? It may be, he will scarce cast his eye or lend his ear to this discourse ! but if there be any such reading, or within hearing, he must know from the Lord that made him, that he is far from the kingdom of God. May a man be civilized and not converted ; where then shall the drunkard and glutton appear ? May a man keep company with the wise virgins, and yet be shut out ; shall not "a companion of fools much more be destroyed ?" Prov. xiii, 20. May a man be true and just in his dealings, and yet not be justified of God ! What then will become of thee, O wretched man, whose conscience tells thee thou art false in thy trade, and false to thy word, and makest thy advantage by a lying tongue ? If men may be enlightened and brought to the performance of holy duties, and yet go down to perdition for resting in them and sitting down on this side of conversion ; what will become of you, O miserable families, that live without God in the world ? and of you, O wretched sinners, with whom God is scarce in all your thoughts ; that are so ignorant that you cannot,

or so careless that you will not pray ? O repent and be converted ; "break off your sins by righteousness," away to Christ for pardoning and renewing grace : give up yourselves to him, to walk with him in holiness ; or else you shall never see God. O that you would take the warnings of God ! In his name I once more admonish you : "Turn you at my reproof," Prov. i, 23. "Forsake the foolish, and live,"

Prov. ix, 6. "Be sober, righteous, godly," Titus ii, 12. "Wash your hands, ye sinners ; purify your hearts, ye double minded," James iv, 8. "Cease to do evil, learn to do well," Isa. i, 16, 17. "But if you will go on, you must die," Ezek. xxxi, 11.

CHAPTER II.

Showing positively what conversion is.

I MAY not leave you with your eyes half open, as he "that saw men as trees walking," Mark viii, 24. The word is "profitable for doctrine as well as reproof," 2 Tim. iii, 16. And therefore having thus far conducted you by the shoals and rocks of so many dangerous mistakes, I would guide you at length into the harbour of truth.

Conversion then, in short, lies in the thorough change both of the heart and life : I shall briefly describe it in its nature and causes.

1. "The author is the Spirit of God :" and therefore it is called "the sanctification of the Spirit," 2 Thess. ii, 13, and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Tit. iii, 5, yet not excluding the other persons in the trinity ; for the apostle teacheth us to bless "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that he hath begotten us again," 1 Pet. i, 3, and Christ is said to give "repentance unto Israel," Acts v, 31, and is called "the Everlasting Father," Isaiah ix, 6, and we his seed, and "the children which God hath

given him," Heb. ii, 13 ; Isa. liii, 10. O blessed birth, the whole trinity fathers the new creature ; yet this work is principally ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and so we are said to be " born of the Spirit," John iii, 8.

So then it is a work above man's power : " We are born not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," John i, 18. Never think thou canst convert thyself : if ever thou wouldst be savingly converted, thou must despair of doing it in thy own strength. It is a resurrection from the dead, Rev. xx, 5 ; Ephes. ii, 1 ; a new creation, Gal. vi, 15 ; Eph. ii, 10 ; a work of absolute omnipotence, Ephes. i, 19. Are these out of the reach of human power ? If thou hast no more than thou hadst by thy first birth, a good nature, a meek and chaste temper, &c. thou art a very stranger to true conversion : this is a supernatural work.

2. "The moving cause is internal and external. The internal mover is only free grace." " Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his own mercy he saved us, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost," Titus iii, 5. " Of his own will begat he us," James i, 18. We are chosen and called *unto* sanctification, Eph. i, 4.

How affectionately doth Peter lift up his hand ! " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, who of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again," 1 Pet. i, 3. How feelingly doth Paul magnify the free mercy of God in it ! " God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us toge-

ther with Christ : by grace ye are saved," Eph ii, 4, 5.

"The external mover is the merit and intercession of the blessed Jesus." "He hath obtained gifts for the rebellious," Psalm lxviii, 18, and through him it is that God worketh in us what is well pleasing in his sight, Heb. xiii, 21. Through him are all spiritual blessings bestowed upon us in heavenly things; Eph. i, 3. He interceded for them that believed not, John xvii, 20. Every convert is the fruit of his travail, Isa. liii, 11. O never was infant born into the world with that difficulty that Christ endured for us ! how emphatically he groaned in his travail ! All the pains that he suffered on his cross, they were our birth pains, Acts ii, 24, "*ordinas*," the pulls and throes, that Christ endured for us. He is made sanctification to us, 1 Cor. i, 30. He sanctified himself (that is, set apart himself as a sacrifice) that we may be sanctified, John xvii, 19. We are sanctified "through the offering of his body once for all," Heb. x, 10.

3. "The instrument is either personal or real." The personal is the ministry. "I have begotten you in Christ through the Gospel," 1 Cor. iv, 15. Christ's ministers are they that are sent to open men's eyes, and to turn them to God, Acts xxvi, 18.

"The instrument real is the word." We were begotten by the word of truth : this is it that enlightens the eye, that converteth the soul, Psalm xix, 7, 8 ; that maketh wise to salvation, 2 Tim. iii, 15. This is the incorruptible seed

by which we are born again, 1 Pet. i, 23. If we are washed it is by the word, Eph. v, 26. If we are sanctified it is through the truth, John xvii, 17. This generates faith, and regenerates us, Rom. x, 17 ; James i, 18.

O ye saints, how should ye love the word ! for by this you have been converted. O ye sinners, how should ye ply the word ! for by this you must be converted ; no other ordinary means but this. You that have felt its renewing power, make much of it while you live, be for ever thankful for it ; tie it about your necks, write it upon your hands, lay it in your bosom, Prov. vi, 21, 22. When you go let it lead you ; when you sleep let it keep you ; when you wake let it talk with you. Say with holy David, "I will never forget thy precepts, for with them thou hast quickened me," Psalm cxix, 93. Ye that are unconverted, read the word with diligence, flock to it where powerfully preached, fill the porches as the multitude of the impotent, blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water, John v, 3. Pray for the coming of the Spirit in the word. Come off thy knees to the sermon, and come to thy knees from the sermon. The seed doth not prosper, because not watered by prayers and tears, nor covered my meditation.

4. "The final cause is man's salvation, and God's glory." We are chosen through sanctification to salvation, 2 Thess. ii, 13 ; called that we might be glorified, Rom. viii, 30 ; but especially that God might be glorified, Isa. lx, 21 ;

that we should show forth his praise, 1 Pet. ii, 9, and be fruitful in good works, Col. i, 10. O Christian ! do not forget the end of thy calling ; let thy light shine, Matt. v, 16, let thy lamp burn, let thy fruits be good, and many and in season, Psalm i, 3 ; let all thy designs fall in with God's, that he may be magnified in thee, Phil. i, 10.

5. "The subject is the true believer, and that in all his parts and powers, members and mind." Conversion is no repairing of the old building ; but it takes all down and erects a new structure. It is not the putting in a patch, or sewing on a list of holiness : but, with the true convert, holiness is woven in all his powers, principles, and practice. The sincere Christian is quite a new fabric, from the foundation to the top stone all new. He is a new man, Eph. iv, 24, a new creature. "All things are become new," 2 Cor. v, 17. Conversion is a deep work, a heart work, Acts ii, 37, and vi, 14 ; it turns all upside down, and makes a man be in a new world. It goes throughout with men, throughout the mind, throughout the members, throughout the motions, of the whole life.

1. "Throughout the mind." It makes a universal change within. First, it turns the balance of the judgment, so that God and his glory do weigh down all carnal and worldly interest, Acts xx, 24 ; Phil. i, 20 ; Psa. lxxiii, 25. It opens the eye of the mind, and makes the scales of its native ignorance to fall off, and

"turns men from darkness to light," Acts xxvi, 18; Eph. iii, 8; 1 Pet. ii, 2. The man that before saw no danger in his condition, now concludes himself lost, and for ever undone, Acts ii, 37, unless renewed by the power of grace. He that formerly thought there was little hurt in sin, now comes to see it to be the chief of evils: he sees the unreasonableness, the unrighteousness, the deformity and filthiness that is in sin, so that he is affrighted with it, loathes it, dreads it, flees it, and even abhors himself for it, Romans vii, 18; Job xlvi, 6; Ezekiel xxxvi, 31.

Now, according to this new light, the man is of another mind, another judgment, than before he was: now God is all with him, he hath none "in heaven or in earth like him," Psalm lxxiii, 25. He prefers him truly before all the world; his favour is his life, the light of his countenance is more than corn, or wine and oil, the good that formerly he inquired after, and set his heart upon, Psalm iv, 6, 7. This is the convert's voice; "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever," Psalm lxxiii, 25, 26; Lam. iii, 24.

Secondly, "It turns the bias of the will, both as to means and end." 1. "The intentions of the will are altered," Ezek. xxxvi, 26; Jer. xxvi, 33; Isa. xxvi, 8, 9. Now the man hath new ends and designs: now he intends God above all, and desires and designs nothing in

all the world so much as that Christ may be magnified in him, Phil. i, 20. He counts himself more happy in this than in all that the earth could yield, that he may be serviceable to Christ, and bring him glory in his generation. This is the mark he aims at, that the name of Jesus may be great in the world ; and that all the sheaves of his brethren may bow to his sheaf, Gen. xxxvii, 7.

Reader, dost thou view this, and never ask thyself, whether it be thus with thee ? Pause awhile, and breathe on this great concernment.

2. "The choice is also changed," so that he chooseth another way, Psalm cxix, 15. He pitcheth upon God as his blessedness, and upon Christ as the principal, and holiness as the subordinate means to bring him to God, John xiv, 6 ; Rom. ii, 7. He chooseth Jesus for his Lord, Col. ii, 6. He is not merely forced into Christ by the storm, nor doth he take Christ for bare necessity ; but he deliberately resolves that Christ is his best choice, Phil. i, 2, 3, and would rather have him to choose than all the good of this world, might he enjoy it while he would. Again, he takes holiness for his path : he doth not of mere necessity submit to it : but he likes and loves it. "I have *chosen* the way of thy precepts," Psalm cxix, 173. He takes God's testimonies, not as his bondage, but as his heritage, yea, heritage for ever, verse 111. He counts them not his burthen but his bliss : not his cords but his cordials, 1 John v, 3 ; Psalm cxix, 14, 16, 17. He doth not only bear, but

takes up Christ's yoke. He takes not holiness as the stomach doth the loathed potion, which it will down with rather than die, but as the hungry doth his beloved food. No time passes so sweetly with him as that he spends in the exercise of holiness ; these are both his aliment and element, the desire of his eyes and the joy of his heart, Job xxiii, 12 ; Psalm cxix, 82, 111, 162, 174, and lxxiii, 5. Put thy conscience to it as thou goest, whether thou art the man : O happy man, if this be thy case ! but see thou be thorough and impartial in the search.

Thirdly, "It turns the bent of his affection," 2 Cor. vii, 11. These run all in a new channel : the Jordan is now driven back, and the water runs upward, against its natural course.

Christ is his *hope*, 1 Tim. i, 1 ; this is his *prize*, Phil. iii, 8 ; here his eye is, here his heart is. He is contented to cast all overboard (as the merchant in the storm ready to perish) so he may but keep this jewel.

The first of his *desires* is not after gold, but grace, Phil. iii, 13. He hungers after it, he seeks it as silver, he digs for it as for a hid treasure : he had rather be gracious than be great ; he had rather be the holiest man on earth, than the most learned, the most famous, the most prosperous. While carnal, he said, O if I were but in great esteem, and rolled in wealth and swummed in pleasure ; if my debts were paid, and I and mine provided for, then were I a happy man. But now the tone is changed. O ! saith the convert, if I had but my corruptions subdued,

if I had such measures of grace, such fellowship with God, though I were poor and despised, I should not care; I should account myself a blessed man. Reader, is this the language of thy soul?

His *joys* are changed. He rejoiceth in the ways of God's testimonies, as much as in all riches, Psalm cxix, 14. He "delights in the law of the Lord;" he hath no such joy as in the thoughts of Christ, the fruition of his company, the prosperity of his people.

His *cares* are quite altered: he was once set for the world, and any scraps of by-time were enough for his soul. Now "he gives over caring for the asses," and sets his heart upon the kingdom: now all the cry is, "What shall I do to be saved?" Acts xvi, 30. His great solicitude is how to secure his soul. O how he would bless you if you could put him out of doubt of this!

His *fears* take another turn, Heb. xi, 25, 27. Once he was afraid of nothing so much as the loss of his estate or esteem, the pleasure of friends, or the frowns of the great; nothing sounded so terrible to him as pain, or poverty, or disgrace: now these are little to him in comparison of God's dishonour or displeasure. How warily doth he walk lest he should tread upon a snare! He feareth always; he looks before and behind; he hath his eye upon his heart, and is often casting it over his shoulder, lest he should be overtaken with sin, Psalm xxxix, 1; Prov. xxviii, 14: Eccles. ii, 14. It kills his heart to

think of losing God's favour ; this he dreads as his only undoing, Psalm li, 11, 12, and cxix, 8. No thought in the world doth pinch him and pain him so much, as to think of parting with Christ.

His *love* runs a new course. "My love was crucified," saith Ignatius ; that is, my Christ. "This is my beloved," saith the spouse, Cant. v, 16. How doth Augustine often pour out his love upon Christ ? "O eternal blessedness," &c. He can find no words sweet enough : " Let me see thee, O light of mine eyes ! Come, O thou joy of my spirit ! Let me behold thee, O life of my soul ! Appear unto me, O my great delight, my sweet comfort ! O my God, my life, and the whole glory of my soul ! Let me find thee, O desire of my heart ! Let me hold thee, O love of my soul ! Let me embrace thee, O heavenly bridegroom ! Let me possess thee."

His *sorrows* have now a new vent, 2 Cor. vii, 9, 10. The view of his sins, the sight of a Christ crucified, that would scarce stir him before, now how do they affect his heart !

His *hatred* boils, his anger burns against sin, Psalm cxix, 104. He calls himself fool, and thinks any name too good for himself, when this indignation is stirred up against sin, Psa. lxxiii, 22 ; Prov. xxx, 2.

"Commune then with thy own heart," and attend the common and general current of thine affection, whether it be toward God in Christ above all other concerns. Indeed, sudden and strong commotions of the affections and sensitive parts are often found in hypocrites,

especially where the natural inclination leads thereunto : and contrariwise, the sanctified themselves are many times without very sensible stirring of the affections, where the temper is more slow, dry, and dull. The great inquiry is, whether the judgment and will be steadily determined for God, above all other good, real or apparent ; and if the affections do sincerely follow their choice and conduct, though it be not so strongly and sensibly as is to be desired, there is no doubt but the change is saving.

2. "Throughout the members." Those that were before the instruments of sin, are now become the holy utensils of Christ's living temple, Rom. vi, 16 ; 1 Cor. iii, 16. The *eye* that was once a wandering eye, a wanton eye, a haughty, covetous eye, is now employed as Mary's in weeping over its sins, Luke vii, 38 ; in beholding God in his works, Psalm viii, 3 ; in reading his word, Acts viii, 30 ; in looking up and down for objects of mercy, and opportunities for his service.

The *ear* that was once open to Satan's call, and that, like a vitiated palate, did relish nothing so much as filthy, or at least frothy talk, and the fool's laughter, is now bored to the door of Christ's house, and open to discipline : it saith, " Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth ;" and waits for his words as the rain, and relisheth them more than the appointed food, Job xxxiii, 12, " than the honey and the honeycomb," Psalm xix, 10.

The *head* that was the shop of worldly designs, is now filled with other matters, and set on the

study of God's will, Psalm i, 2, and cxix, 97. The *thoughts* and cares that fill it, are principally how he may please God and flee sin.

His *heart*, that was full of filthy lusts, is now become an altar of incense, where the fire of Divine love is ever kept in; and whence the daily sacrifice of prayer and praise, and the sweet incense of holy desires, ejaculations, and aspirations, are continually ascending, Psalm cviii, 1, and cxix, 20, and cxxxix, 17, 18.

The *mouth* is become a well of life, his *tongue* as choice silver, and his *lips* feed many, now the salt of grace hath seasoned his speech, and eat out the corruption, Col. iv, 6, and cleansed the mouth from its filthy communication, flattery, boasting, lying, swearing, backbiting, that once came like flashes from the hell that was in the heart, James iii, 6, 7.

The *throat* that was once "an open sepulchre," Rom. iii, 13, now sends forth the sweet breath of prayer and holy discourse, and the man speaks in another tongue, in the language of Canaan, and is never so well as when talking of God and Christ, and the matters of another world. His mouth bringeth wisdom, his tongue is become the silver trumpet of his Maker's praise, his glory, and the best member he hath.

Now here you shall have the hypocrite halting: he speaks, it may be, like an angel, but he hath a covetous eye, or the gain of unrighteousness in his hand; or the hand is white, but his heart is full of rottenness, Matt. xxiii, 27, full

of unmortified cares, a very oven of lust, a shop of pride, the seat of malice. It may be with Nebuchadnezzar's image, he hath a *golden head*, a great deal of knowledge : but he hath feet of *clay*, his affections are worldly, he minds worldly things, and his way and walk are sensual and carnal : you may trace him in secret haunts, and his footsteps will be found in some by-paths of sin. The work is not throughout with him.

3 "Throughout the motions or the life and practice." The new man takes a new course, Eph. ii, 2, 3, "his conversation is in heaven," Phil. iii, 20. No sooner doth he obey the call of Christ, but he straightway becomes a follower of him, Matt. iv, 20. When God hath given the new heart, and wrote his law in his mind, he forthwith walks in his statutes, and keeps his judgments, Ezek. xxxvi, 26, 27.

Though sin may be in him, yet it "hath no more dominion over him," Rom. vi, 7, 14, he "hath his fruit unto holiness," chap. vi, 22.— And the law of life, and Jesus, is what he eyes as his copy, Psalm cxix, 30 ; Heb. xii, 2 ; and he hath an unfeigned respect for all God's commandments, making conscience even of little sins and little duties, Psalm cxix, 113. His very infirmities are his soul's burden, and are like the dust in a man's eye, which, though but little, yet is not a little troublesome. (O man ! dost thou read this, and never turn it upon thy soul by self-examination ?) The sincere convert is not one man at church and another at home ;

he is not a saint on his knees, and a cheat in his shop ; he will not tithe mint and cummin, and neglect “mercy and judgment, and the weightier matters of the law ;” he doth not pretend piety and neglect morality, Matt. xxiii, 14 ; but he turneth from all his sins, and keeps all God’s statutes, Ezek. xviii, 21, not allowing himself in the breach of any, Romans vii, 15. Now he delights in the word, and sets himself to prayer, and opens his hand and draws out his soul to the hungry, Rom. vii, 22 ; Psalm cix, 4 ; Isa. lviii, 10. “ He breaketh off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor,” Daniel iv, 27, and “ hath a good conscience, willing in all things to live honestly,” Heb. xiii, 13, 18, and to keep without offence toward God and man.

Here again you find the unsoundness of many professors, that take themselves for good Christians : they are partial in the law, Malachi ii, 9, and take up with the cheap and easy duties of religion, but go not through with the work. They are as a cake not turned. It may be you shall have them exact in their words, punctual in their dealings, but then they do not exercise themselves unto godliness ; and for examining themselves, and governing their hearts, to this they are strangers. You may have them duly at church, but follow them to their families, and there you shall see little but the world minded ; or if they have a road for family duties, follow them to their closets, and there you shall find their souls are little looked after. It may be

they seem otherwise religious, but bridle not their tongues, and so all their religion is vain, James i, 26. It may be they come up to closet and family prayer; but follow them to their shops, and there you shall find them in a trade of lying, or some covert and cleanly way of deceit. Thus the hypocrite goes throughout in the course of his obedience. And thus much for the subject of *conversion*.

6. "The terms are either *from which*, or *to which*."

1. "The terms from which we turn in this motion of conversion, are sin, Satan, the world, and our own righteousness."

First, *Sin*. When a man is converted he is out with sin; yea, with all sin, Psalm cxix, 128. But most of all with his own sins, and especially with his bosom sin, Psalm xviii, 23. Sin is now the butt of his indignation, 2 Cor. vii, 11; he thirsts to bathe his hands in the blood of his sins. His sins set his sorrows abroach: if God should give him his choice, he would choose any affliction so he might be rid of sin.

Before conversion he had light thoughts of sin; he cherished it in his bosom, as Uriah his lamb; "he nourished it up, and it grew up together with him; it did eat as it were his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter." But when God opens his eyes by conversion, he throws it away with abhorrence, Isa. xxx, 22. When a man is savingly changed, he is not only deeply convinced of the danger, but defilement

of sin ; and O, how earnest is he with God to be purified ! He loathes himself for his sins, Ezek. xxxvi, 31. He runs to Christ, and “ casts himself into the fountain for sin and for uncleanness,” Zech. xiii, 1.

The sound convert is heartily engaged against sin, he struggles with it, he wars against it ; he will never yield the cause nor lay down his weapons, but he will up and to it again while he has breath in his body. He can forgive his other enemies, he can pity them and pray for them, Acts vii, 60 ; but here he is implacable, here he is set upon revenge : his eye shall not pity, his hand shall not spare, though it be a right hand or a right eye. Be it a gainful sin, most delightful to his nature, or support to his esteem with carnal friends, yet he will rather throw away his gain, see his credit fall, or the flower of pleasure wither in his hand, than he will allow himself in any known way of sin, Luke xix, 8. He will grant no indulgence, he will give no toleration, he draws upon sin wherever he meets it, and frowns upon it with this unwelcome salute, “ Have I found thee, O mine enemy ?”

Reader, hath conscience been at work while thou hast been looking over these lines ? Hast thou pondered these things in thy heart ? Hast thou searched the book *within*, to see if these things be so ? If not, read it again, and make thy conscience speak, whether or not it be thus with thee.

Hast thou “ crucified thy flesh, with its affec-

tions and lusts :" and not only confessed, but forsaken thy sins ? All sin in thy desires, and the practice of every deliberate and wilful sin in thy life ! If not, thou art yet unconverted.

Secondly, *Satan*. Conversion " binds the strong man, spoils him of his armour, casts out his goods, and turns men from the power of Satan unto God," Acts xxvi, 18. Before, the devil could no sooner hold up his finger to the sinner to call him to his wicked company, sinful games, filthy delights, but presently he followed, " like an ox to the slaughter, and a fool to the correction of the stocks ; as a bird that hasteth to the prey, and knoweth not that it is for his life." But when he is converted, he serves another Master, and takes quite another course, 1 Pet. iv, 4 ; he goes and comes at Christ's beck, Col. iii, 24. He watches against the snares and baits of Satan, and studies to be acquainted with his devices : he is very suspicious of his plots, and is very jealous of what comes athwart him, lest Satan should have some design upon him : he " wrestles against principalities and powers," Eph. vi, 12 ; he entertains the messenger of Satan as men do the messenger of death ; he keeps his eye upon his enemy, 1 Pet. v, 8, and watches in his duties lest Satan should put in his foot.

Thirdly, *The world*. Before a sound faith, a man is overcome of the world : either he bows down to mammon, or idolizes his reputation, or is a " lover of pleasure more than a lover of God," 2 Tim. iii, 4. Here is the root

of man's misery by the fall, he is turned aside to the creature instead of God, and gives that esteem, confidence, and affection to the creature that is due to him alone, Rom. i, 25 ; Matt. x, 37 ; Prov. xviii, 11 ; Jer. xvii, 5.

But converting grace sets all in order again, and puts God on the throne, and the world his footstool, Psalm lxxiii, 25. Christ in the heart, and the world under the feet, Eph. iii, 17 ; Rev. xii, 1. So Paul, "I am crucified to the world, and the world to me," Gal. vi, 14. Before this change, all the cry was, "Who will show us any worldly good?" But now he sings another tune, "Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon me," and let who will take the corn and wine, Psalm iv, 6, 7. Before, his heart's delight and content was in the world ; then the song was, "Soul, take thine ease ; eat, drink, and be merry ; thou hast much goods laid up for many years :" but now all this is withered, and "there is no comeliness that he should desire it," and he tunes up with the sweet psalmist of Israel, "The Lord is the portion of my inheritance : the lines are fallen to me in a fair place, and I have a goodly heritage." He blesseth himself and boasteth himself in God, Psalm xxxiv, 2 ; Lam. iii, 24. Nothing else can give him content. He hath written *vanity and vexation* upon all his worldly enjoyments, Eccles. i, 2, and *loss and dung* upon all human excellencies, Phil. iii, 7, 8. He hath light and immortality now in chase, Rom. ii, 7. He pursues grace and glory, and hath an incorruptible

crown in pursuit, 1 Cor. ix, 25. His heart is set in him to seek the Lord, 1 Chron. xxii, 9, and 2 Chron. xv, 15. He "first seeks the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness thereof;" and religion is no longer a matter by the by with him, but the main of his care, Matthew vi, 33 ; Psalm xxvii, 4.

Well, then, pause a little, and look within : doth not this nearly concern thee ? Thou pretendest for Christ, but doth not the world sway thee ? Dost not thou take more real delight and content in the world than in him ? Dost thou not find thyself better at ease when the world goes to thy mind, and thou art encompassed with carnal delights, than when retired to prayer and meditation in thy closet, or attending upon God's word and worship ? No surer evidence of an unconverted state than to have the things of the world uppermost in our aim, love, and estimation, John ii, 15 ; James iv, 4.

With the sound convert, Christ hath the supremacy. How dear is his name to him ! How precious is his favour ! Cant. i, 3 ; Psa. xlv, 8. The name of Jesus is engraven upon his heart, Gal. iv, 19, and lies as a bundle of myrrh between his breasts, Cant. i, 13, 14. Honour is but air, and laughter is but madness, and mammon is fallen, like Dagon before the ark, with hands and head broken off on the threshold, when once Christ is savingly revealed. Here is the pearl of great price to the convert, here is his treasure, here is his hope, Matt. xiii, 44, 45. This is his glory, " My beloved is mine, and I am his," Gal.

vi, 14 ; Cant. ii, 16 ; O, it is sweeter to him to be able to say, Christ is mine, than if he could say, The kingdom is mine : The Indies are mine.

Fourthly, *Your own righteousness.* Before conversion, man seeks to cover himself with his own fig leaves, Phil. iii, 6, 7, and to make himself whole with his own duties, Mic. vi, 6, 7. He is apt to trust in himself, Luke xvi, 16, and xviii, 9, and sets up his own righteousness, and to reckon his counters for gold, and not submit to the righteousness of God, Rom. x, 3. But conversion changes his mind ; now he casts away his own righteousness as a filthy rag, Isa. xliv, 6. Now he is brought to poverty of spirit, Matthew v, 3 ; complains of, and condemns himself, Rom. vii, and all his inventory by nature, is " poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind, and naked," Rev. iii, 17. He sees a world of iniquity in his holy things, and calls his once idolized righteousness but filth and dross, and would not for a thousand worlds be found in himself, Phil. iii, 4, 7, 8, 9. His finger is ever upon his sores, Psalm li, 3, his sins, his wants. Now he begins to set a high price upon Christ's righteousness ; he sees the need of a Christ in every duty to justify both his person and performances ; he cannot live without him ; he cannot pray without him ; Christ must go with him, or else he cannot come into the presence of God ; he leans upon the hand of Christ, and so bows himself in the house of his God ; he sets himself down for a lost, undone man without him ; his life is hid, and grows in Christ, as the

root of a tree spreads in the earth for stability and nutriment. Before, the news of Christ was a stale and sapless thing ; but now how sweet is Christ ! The voice of the convert is, with the martyr, “ None but Christ.”

The terms to which we turn are,

1st. To God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2dly. To the laws, ordinances, and ways of Christ.

A man is never truly justified, till his very heart be in truth set upon God above all things, as his portion and chief good. These are the natural breathings of a believer’s heart : “ Thou art my portion,” Psalm cxix, 57. “ My soul shall make her boast in the Lord,” Psa. xxxvi, 2. “ My expectation is from him ; he only is my rock and my salvation, he is my defence. In God is my salvation and glory ; the rock of my strength, and my refuge is in God,” Psalm lxii, 1, 2, 5, 7, and xviii, 1, 2.

Would you put it to an issue whether you be converted or not ? Now let thy soul, and all that is within thee, attend :—

Hast thou taken God for thy happiness ? Where doth the content of thy heart lie ? Whence doth thy choicest comfort come in ? Come, then, and with Abraham, “ lift up thine eyes eastward and westward, and northward and southward,” and cast about thee. What is it that thou wouldst have in heaven or on earth to make thee happy ? If God should give thee thy choice, as he did Solomon, or would say to thee as Ahasuerus to Esther, “ What is thy petition, and what

is thy request, and it shall be granted thee?" Esther v, 3 ;—what wouldest thou ask? Go into the gardens of pleasure, and gather all fragrant flowers from thence, would these content thee? Go to the treasures of mammon, suppose thou mightest lade thyself as heavy as thou wouldest from thence: Go to the towers, to the trophies of honour: what thinkest thou of being a man of renown, and having a name like the name of the great men of the earth? Would any of these, would all these suffice thee, and make thee count thyself a happy man? If so, then certainly thou art carnal and unconverted. If not, go farther; wade into the Divine excellencies, the store of his mercies, the hiding of his power, the depth unfathomable of his all-sufficiency; doth this suit thee best, and please thee most? Dost thou say, "It is good to be here?" Matt. xvii, 4. "Here will I pitch, here will I live and die." Wilt thou let all the world go rather than this? Then it is well between God and thee. Happy art thou, O man, happy art thou, that ever thou wast born; if a God can make thee happy, thou must needs be happy; for thou hast vouched the Lord to be thy God, Deut. xxvi, 17. Dost thou say to Christ as he to us, "Thy Father shall be my Father, and thy God be my God?" John xiv, 7. Here is the turning point. An unsound professor never takes up his rest in God, but converting grace does the work, and so cures the fatal misery of the fall, by turning the heart from its idol to the living God, 1 Thess. i, 9. Now says the soul,

"Lord, whither shall I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life," John vi, 68. Here he centres, here he settles; O! it is the entrance of heaven to him to see his interest in God. When he discovers this, he saith, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee," Psalm cxvi, 7; and is even ready to breathe out Simeon's song, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace," Luke ii, 29, and saith with Jacob, when his old heart revived at the welcome tidings, "It is enough," Gen. xlvi, 28. When he seeth that he hath a God in covenant to go to, "this is all his salvation, and all his desire," 2 Sam. xxiii, 5.

Man, is this thy case? hast thou experienced this? why then, "blessed art thou of the Lord;" God hath been at work with thee, he hath laid hold on thy heart by the power of converting grace, or else thou couldest never have done this.

The true convert turns to Jesus Christ the only mediator between God and man, 1 Tim. ii, 5. His work is to bring us to God, 1 Pet. iii, 18. He is the way to the Father, John xiv, 6, the only plank on which we may escape, the only door by which we may enter, John x, 9, as the only means of life, as the only way, the only name given under heaven, Acts iv, 12. He looks not for salvation in any other but him, nor in any other with him; but throws himself on Christ alone, as one that should cast himself with arms spread out upon the sea.

"Here," says the convinced sinner, "I will

venture ; and if I perish, I perish ; if I die, I will die here. But Lord, suffer me not to perish under the pitiful eye of thy mercy. Entreat me not to leave thee, or to turn away from following after thee," Ruth i, 16. Here I will throw myself : if thou kick me, if thou kill me, I will not go from thy door, Job xiii, 17.

Thus the poor soul doth venture on Christ, and resolvedly adhere to him. Before conversion the man made light of Christ ; minded his farm, friends, merchandise, more than Christ, Matt. xxii, 5 ; now Christ is to him as his necessary food, his daily bread, the life of his heart, the staff of his life, Gal. ii, 20. His great design is, that Christ may be magnified in him, Phil. i, 20. His heart once said as they to the spouse, "What is thy beloved more than another?" Cant. v, 9. He found more sweetness in his merry company, wicked games, and earthly delights, than in Christ. He took religion for a fancy, and the talk of great enjoyments for an idle dream : but now "for him to live is Christ." He sets light by all that he accounted precious, "for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ," Phil. iii, 8.

All of Christ is accepted by the sincere convert, he loves not only the wages, but the work of Christ, Rom. vii, 12 ; not only the benefits, but the burden of Christ : he is willing not only to tread out the corn but to draw under the yoke ; he takes up the commands of Christ, yea, and the cross of Christ, Matt. xi, 9, and xvi, 24.

The unsound convert closes only by halves

with Christ ; he is all for the salvation of Christ, but he is not for sanctification ; he is for the privileges, but values not the person of Christ : he divides the offices and benefits of Christ. This is an error in the foundation : who loveth life, let him beware here ! it is an undoing mistake, of which you have been often warned, and yet none more common. Jesus is a sweet name, but men “love not the Lord Jesus in sincerity,” Ephes. vi, 24. They will not have him as God offers, “to be a Prince and a Saviour,” Acts vi, 31. They divide what God hath joined, the King and the Priest : yea, they will not accept the salvation of Christ as he intends it : they divide it here. Every man’s vote is for salvation from suffering, but they desire not to be saved from sinning ; they would have their lives saved, but withal would have their lusts. Yea, many divide here again ; they would be content to have some of their sins destroyed, but they cannot leave the lap of Delilah, or divorce the beloved Herodias. They cannot be cruel to the right eye or right hand ; the “Lord must pardon them in this thing,” 2 Kings v, 18.

O be infinitely tender here ; your souls lie upon it. The sound convert takes a whole Christ, and takes him for all intents and purposes, without exceptions, without limitations, without reserves. He is willing to have Christ upon his own terms, upon any terms. He is willing to have the dominion of Christ as well as deliverance by Christ. He saith with Paul, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do ?” Acts

ix, 6 ; any thing, Lord : he sends a blank to Christ to set down his conditions, Acts ii, 37, and xvi, 30.

2dly. He turns to the laws, ordinances, and ways of Christ. The heart that was once set against these, and could not endure the strictness of these bonds, the severity of these ways, now falls in love with them, and chooses them as its rule and guide for ever, Psa. cxix, 111, 112.

Four things, I observe, God doth work in every sound convert, with reference to the laws and ways of Christ, by which you may come to know your state, if you will be faithful to your own souls ; and therefore keep your eyes upon your heart as you go along.

1st. "The judgment is brought to approve of them, and subscribe to them as most righteous and most reasonable," Psalm cxix, 112, 128, 137, 138. The mind is brought to like the ways of God ; and the corrupt prejudices that were once against them as unreasonable and intolerable, are now removed : the understanding assents to them all, as "holy, just, and good," Rom. vii, 2. How is David taken up with the excellencies of God's laws ! How doth he expatiate in their praise, both from their inherent qualities and admirable effects ! Psalm xix, 8, 10, &c.

2dly. "The desire of the heart is to know the whole mind of Christ," Psalm cxix, 124, 125, 169, and xxv, 4, 5. He would not have one sin undiscovered, nor be ignorant of one duty required. It is the natural and earnest breathing

of a sanctified heart, “ Lord, if there be any way of wickedness in me, do thou discover it. What I know not, teach thou me ; and if I have done iniquity, I will do it no more.” The unsound convert is willingly ignorant, 2 Pet. iii, 5, loves not to come to the light, John iii, 20. He is willing to keep such or such a sin, and therefore is loath to know it to be a sin, and will not let in the light at that window. Now the gracious heart is willing to know the whole latitude and compass of his Maker’s law, Psalm cxix, 18, 19, 27, 33, 64, 66, 68, 78, 108, 124. He receives with all acceptation the word that convinceth him of any duty that he knew not, or minded not before, or discovereth any sin that lay hid before, Psalm cxix, 11.

3dly. “ The free and resolved choice of the will is determined for the ways of Christ, before all the pleasures of sin, and prosperities of the world,” Psalm cxix, 103, 127, 162. His consent is not extorted by some extremity of anguish ; nor is it only a sudden and hasty resolve, but he is deliberately purposed, and comes off freely to the choice, Psalm xvii, 3, and cxix, 30. True, the flesh will rebel, yet the prevailing part of his will is for Christ’s law and government ; so that he takes them not up as his toil or burden, but his bliss, 1 John v, 3 ; Psalm cxix, 60, 72. While the unsanctified goes in Christ’s ways as in chains and fetters, he doth it naturally, Psalm xl, 8 ; Jer. xxxi, 33, and counts Christ’s laws his liberty, Psalm cxix, 32, 45 ; James i, 25. He is will-

ing in the beauties of holiness, Psalm cx, 3, and hath this inseparable mark, " that he had rather (if he might have his choice) live a strict and holy life, than the most prosperous and flourishing life in the world." 1 Sam. x, 26, " There went with Saul a band of men whose hearts God had touched." When God toucheth the hearts of men, they presently follow Christ, Matt. iv, 2 ; and (though drawn) do freely run after him, Cant. i, 4, and willingly offer themselves to the service of the Lord, 2 Chron. xvii, 16, seeking him with their whole desire, chap. xv, 15. Fear hath its use ; but this is not the main spring of motion with the sanctified heart. Christ keeps not his subjects in by force, but is King of a willing people. They are, through his grace, freely resolved for his service, and do it out of choice, not as slaves, but as the son or spouse, from a spring of love and loyal mind. In a word, the laws of Christ are the convert's love, Psalm cxix, 159, 163, 167 ; his desire, verse 2, 20, 40 ; his delight, verse 97, 99, 103, 111, 143 ; and continual study, verse 97, 99, and Psalm i, 2.

4thly. " The bent of this course is directed to keep God's statutes," Psalm cxix, 4, 8, 167, 168. It is the daily care of his life to walk with God. He seeks great things, he hath noble designs, though he falls too short. He aims at nothing less than perfection ; he desires it, he reaches after it ; he would not rest in any pitch of grace, till he were quite rid of sin, and had perfected holiness, Phil. iii, 11, 14.

Here the hypocrite's rottenness may be discovered. He desires holiness, as one well said, only as a bridge to heaven, and inquires earnestly what is the least that will serve his turn ; and if he can get but so much as may bring him to heaven, this is all he cares for. But the sound convert desires holiness for holiness' sake, Psalm cxix, 97 ; Matt. v, 6, and not only for heaven's sake. He would not be satisfied with so much as might save him from hell, but desires the highest pitch : yet desires are not enough : what is thy way and thy course ? Is the drift and scope of thy life altered ? Is holiness thy trade, and religion thy business ? Romans viii, 1 ; Matt. xxv, 16 ; Phil. i, 20. If not, thou art short of sound conversion.

APPLICATION. And is this that we have described the conversion that is of absolute necessity to salvation ? Then be informed, 1. That "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life." 2. "That there are but few that find it." 3. That there is need of a Divine power savingly to convert a sinner to Jesus Christ.

Again : Then be exhorted, O man that readest, to turn in upon thy own self. What saith conscience ? Doth it not begin to bite ? Doth it not pain thee as thou goest ? Is this thy judgment, this thy choice ; and this thy way that we have described ? If so, then it is well. But doth not thy heart condemn thee, and tell thee there is such a sin as thou livest in, against thy conscience ? Doth it not tell thee, there is such

and such a secret way of wickedness that thou art guilty of? Such or such a duty that thou makest no conscience of?

Doth not conscience carry thee to thy closet, and tell thee how seldom prayer and reading are performed there?

Doth it not carry thee to thy family, and show thee the charge of God, and the souls of thy children and servants that are neglected there? Doth not conscience lead thee to thy shop, thy trade, and tell thee of some mystery of iniquity there? Doth it not carry thee to thy places of entertainment, and remind thee of the company thou keepest there; the precious time thou mispendest there; the talents thou wastest there? Doth it not lead thee to thy secret chamber, and discover to thee things that are hid from the eyes of man, and known only to God and thyself?

O conscience, do thy duty: in the name of the living God, I command thee to discharge thy office. Lay hold upon this sinner, fall upon him, arrest him, apprehend him, undeceive him. What! wilt thou flatter and soothe him while he lives in his sins? Awake, O conscience; what meanest thou, O sleeper? What! Hast thou never a reproof in thy mouth? What! Shall this soul die in his careless neglect of God and eternity, and thou altogether hold thy peace? What! Shall he go on in his trespasses, and yet have peace? O rouse up thyself, and do thy work! Now let the preacher in thy bosom speak, cry aloud and spare not: lift up thy voice like a trumpet.

let not the blood of his soul be required at thy hands.

CHAPTER III.

Of the necessity of conversion.

It may be you are ready to say, What meaneth this stir? And are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, still ringing one lesson in your ears, that you should "repent and be converted," Acts iii, 19. But I must say unto you as Ruth to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave you, nor to turn aside from following after you," Ruth i, 16. Were it a matter of indifference, I would never make so much ado: might you be saved as you be, I would gladly let you alone: but would you not have me solicitous for you, when I see you ready to perish? As the Lord liveth, before whom I am, I have not the least hopes of seeing one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted; I utterly despair of your salvation, except you will be prevailed with to turn thoroughly, and give up yourselves to God in holiness and newness of life. Hath God said, "Except ye be born again, ye cannot see the kingdom of God," John iii, 3, and yet do you wonder why your ministers do so plainly travail in birth with you? Think it not strange that I am in earnest with you to follow after holiness, and long to see the image of God upon you: never did any, nor shall any,

enter into heaven by any other way but this. The conversion described is not a high pitch of some taller Christians, but every soul that is saved passeth this universal change.

It was a passage of the noble Roman, when he was hastening with corn to the city in the famine, and the mariners were loath to set sail in foul weather, "Our voyage is more necessary than our lives." What is it that thou dost count necessary ? Is thy bread necessary ? Is thy breath necessary ? Then thy conversion is much more necessary. Indeed, this is the one thing necessary. Thine estate is not necessary ; thou mayest sell all for the pearl of great price, and yet be a gainer by the purchase, Matt. xiii, 46. Thy life is not necessary ; thou mayest part with it for Christ to an infinite advantage. Thine esteem is not necessary ; thou mayest be reproached for the name of Christ, and yet be happy : yea, much more happy in reproach than in repute, 1 Pet. iv, 14 ; Matt. v, 10, 11. But thy conversion is necessary ; thy damnation lies upon it. And is it not needful, in so important a case, to look about thee ? On this one point depends thy making or marring to all eternity.

But I shall more particularly show the necessity of conversion in *five* things ; for without this,

First, "Thy being is vain." Is it not a pity that thou shouldest be good for nothing, an unprofitable burden of the earth, a wart or wen in the body of the universe ? Thus thou art while unconverted : for thou canst not answer the end of thy being. Is it not for the Divine

pleasure that thou art and wert created ? Rev. iv, 11. Did he not make thee for himself ? Prov. xvi, 4. Art thou a man, and hast thou reason ? Why, then, bethink thyself why and whence thy being is : behold God's workmanship in thy body, and ask thyself, To what end did God rear this fabric ? Consider the noble faculties of thy heaven-born soul : to what end did God bestow these excellencies ? To no other than that thou shouldest please thyself, and gratify thy senses ? Did God send men like the swallows into the world, only to gather a few sticks and dirt, and build their nests, and breed up their young, and then away ? The very heathens could see farther than this.—“Art thou so fearfully and wonderfully made,” Psalm cxix, 14, and dost thou not yet think with thyself, Surely it was for some noble and high end ?

O man ! set thy reason a little in the chair, Is it not pity such a goodly fabric should be raised in vain ? Verily thou art in vain, except thou art for God : better thou hadst no being, than not to be for him. Wouldest thou serve thy end ? Thou must repent and be converted ; without this, thou art to *no* purpose, yea, to *bad* purpose.

First, to no purpose. Man unconverted is like a choice instrument that hath every string broke or out of tune. The Spirit of the living God must repair and tune it by the grace of regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of actuating grace, or else thy prayers will be

but howlings, and all thy services will make no music in the ears of the Most High, Eph. ii, 10; Phil. ii, 13; Hos. vii, 14; Isa. i, 15. All thy powers and faculties are so corrupt in thy natural state, that except thou be purged from dead works thou canst not serve the living God, Heb. ix, 1; Titus i, 15.

An unsanctified man cannot fully work the work of God: he hath no skill in it: he is altogether as unskilful in the work, as in the word of righteousness, Heb. v, 13. There are great mysteries as well in the practices as in the principles of godliness: now the unregenerate "know not the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xiii, 11; 1 Tim. iii, 16. Almsgiving is not a service of God, but of vain glory, if not held forth by the hand of Divine or penitential love. What is the prayer of the lips without the heart, but the carcass without the life? What are all our confessions, unless they be exercises of godly sorrow and unfeigned repentance? What our petitions unless animated all along with holy desires, and faith in the Divine attributes and promises? What our praises and thanksgivings, unless from the love of God and a holy gratitude, and sense of God's mercies in the heart? So that a man may as well expect the tree should speak, or look for logic from brutes, or motion from the dead, as for any service holy and perfectly acceptable to God, from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good? Matt. vii, 18.

Secondly, To bad purpose. The unconverted

soul is a very cage of unclean birds, Rev. xviii, 2 ; a sepulchre full of corruption and rotteness, Matt. xxiii, 27 ; a loathsome carcass, full of crawling worms, and sending forth a hellish and most noisome savour in the nostrils of God, Psalm xiv, 3. O dreadful case ! Dost thou not see a change to be needful ? Would it not have grieved one to have seen the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with idol service ? Dan. v, 2, 3. Was it such an abomination to the Jews, when Antiochus set up the picture of a swine at the entrance of the temple ? How much more abominable then would it have been to have had the very temple itself turned into a stable or a sty, and to have had the holy of holies served like the house of Baal, and to have been turned into a draught house ? 2 Kings x, 27. This is the very case with the unregenerate : all thy members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, Rom. vi, 19 ; servants of Satan, and the inmost power into a receptacle of uncleanness, Eph. ii, 2 ; Titus i, 15. You may see the ungodly guests within by what comes out ; for, "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murder, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies," &c. ; these discover what a hell there is within.

O abuse insufferable ! to see a heaven-born soul abased to the filthiest drudgery ! To see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the works of God, the lord of the universe, lap-

ping with the prodigal at the trough, or licking up with greediness the most loathsome vomit! What is such a lamentation, to see those that did feed delicately, sit desolate in the streets; and the precious sons of Sion, comparable to fine gold, esteemed but as earthen pitchers, and those that were clothed in scarlet embrace dung hills! Lam. v, 2, 3; and is it not much more fearful to see the only thing that hath immortality in this lower world, and carries the stamp of God, become as “a vessel wherein there is no pleasure?” Jer. xxi, 28; (which is but a modest expression of the vessel men put to the most sordid use.) O indignity intolerable! Better thou wert dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abased to so filthy a service.

Secondly, “Not only man, but the whole visible creation, is in vain without this.” Beloved, God hath made all the visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man, and man only is the spokesman for all the rest.—Man is in the universe, like the tongue to the body, which speaks for all its members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker but by dumb signs, and hints to man that he should speak for them. Man is as it were the high priest of God’s creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. The Lord God expecteth a tribute of praise from all his works, Psa. ciii, 22; now all the rest do bring in their tribute to man, and pay it by his hand; so then if man be false, and faithless, and selfish,

God is wronged of all, and shall have no active glory from his works.

O dreadful thought to think of! that God should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness thereupon, and all in vain ; and that man should be guilty at last of robbing and spoiling him of the glory of all. O think of this ! While thou art unconverted, all the offices of the creatures to thee are in vain ; thy meat nourisheth thee in vain, the sun holds forth its light to thee in vain, the stars that serve thee in their course by their powerful, though hidden influence, Judges v, 20 ; Hosea ii, 21, 22, do it in vain ; thy clothes warm thee in vain ; thy beast carries thee in vain. In a word, the unwearied labour and continued travail of the whole creation, as to thee, is in vain. The service of all the creatures that drudge for thee, and yield forth their strength unto thee, that therewith thou shouldest serve their Maker, is all but lost labour. Hence the whole creation groaneth under the abuse of this unsanctified world, Rom. viii, 22, that perverts them to the service of their lusts, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

Thirdly, “Without this thy religion is vain,” James i, 26. All thy religious performances will be but lost, for they cannot save thy soul, 1 Cor. xiii, 2, 3, which is the very end of religion. Is not that man’s case dreadful whose sacrifices are as murders, and whose prayers are a breath of abomination ? Isa. lxvi, 3 ; Prov.

xxviii, 9. Many under convictions think they will set upon mending, and that a few prayers and alms will save all again ; but alas ! Sirs, while your hearts remain unsanctified, your duties will not pass. How punctual was Jehu ! And yet all was rejected, because his heart was not upright, 2 Kings x, with Hosea i, 4. How blameless was Paul ? And yet, being unconverted, all was but loss, Phil. iii, 6, 7. Men think they do much in attending God's service, and are ready to twit him with it, Isa. lviii, 3 ; Matt. vii, 22, and set him down so much their debtor, whereas their persons being unsanctified, their duties cannot be saving.

O soul ! do not think when thy sins pursue, a little praying and reforming thy course will pacify God : thou must begin with thy heart ; if that be not renewed, thou canst not please God.

God threatens it as the greatest of temporal judgments, that they should build and not in habit, plant and not gather ; and that their labours should be eat up by strangers, Deut. xxviii, 30, 38, 39, 41. Is it so great a misery to lose our common labours, to sow in vain, and build in vain ? How much more to lose our pains in religion, to pray, and hear, and fast in vain ? This is an undoing and eternal loss. Be not deceived, if thou goest on in thy sinful state, though thou shouldest spread forth thine hands, God will hide his eyes : though thou make many prayers, he will not hear, Isa. i, 15. If a man without skill set about your work, and mar it in

the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but little thanks. God will be worshipped after the due order, 1 Chron. xv, 13. If a servant do our work, but quite contrary to our order, he will have rather stripes than praise. God's work must be done according to God's mind, or he will not be pleased ; and this cannot be, except it be done with a believing or penitential heart, 2 Chron. xxv, 2.

Fourthly, "Without this thy hopes are in vain," Job viii, 12, 13. "The Lord hath rejected thy confidence," Jer. ii, 37.

First, "The hope of comforts here is in vain." It is not only necessary to the safety, but comfort of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, "you shall not know peace," Isaiah lix, 8 ; without the fear of God you cannot have "the comfort of the Holy Ghost," Acts ix, 31 ; God speaks peace only to his people and to his saints, Psalm lxxxv, 8. If you have a false peace, continuing in your sins, it is not of God's speaking, and then you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness, Isaiah i, 5 ; yea, the worst of sickness ; it is a leprosy in the head, Lev. xiii, 44 ; the plague in the heart, 1 Kings viii, 38 ; it is brokenness in the bones, Psalm li, 8 ; it pierceth, it woundeth, it racketh, it tormenteth, 1 Timothy vi, 10. A man may as well expect ease when his distempers are in their full strength, or his bones out of joint, as true comfort while in his sins.

O wretched man ! that canst have no ease

in this case but what comes from the deadliness of thy disease. You shall have the poor sick man saying in his lightness, *I am well*; when you see death in his face, he will needs up and about his business, when the very next step is like to be in his grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss; they think themselves whole, and cry not out for the Physician; but this shows the danger of their case.

Sin doth naturally breed distempers and disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest and commotion is there in a discontented mind! What an eating influence is inordinate care! What is passion but a fever in the mind? What is lust but a fire in the bones? What is pride but a deadly tympany? Or covetousness, but an insatiable or insufferable thirst? Or malice and envy, but venom in the very heart? Spiritual sloth is but a scurvy in the mind; and carnal security a mortal lethargy: and how can that soul have true comfort that labours under so many diseases: but converting grace cures, and so eases the mind: prepares the soul for a settled standing, and immortal peace: "Great peace have they that love thy commandments, and nothing shall offend them," Psalm cxix, 165; they are the ways of wisdom that afford pleasure and peace, Prov. iii, 17. David had infinitely more pleasure in the word, than in all the delights of his court, Psalm cxix, 103, 127. The conscience cannot be truly pacified till soundly purified, Heb. x, 22. Cursed is that peace that is maintained in the

way of sin, Deut. xxix, 19, 20. Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world, peace with sin, and peace in sin.

Secondly, “Thy hopes of salvation hereafter are in vain, yea, worse than vain,” they are most injurious to God, most pernicious to thyself. There is death, separation, blasphemy, in the bowels of this hope. 1. There is death in it : “Thy confidence shall be rooted out of thy tabernacles.” (God will up with it root and branch.) “It shall bring them to the king of terrors,” Job xviii, 14. Though thou mayest lean upon this house it will not stand, Job viii, 14, but will prove like a ruinous building, which when a man trusts to, falls down about his ears. 2. There is desperation in it : “Where is the hope of the hypocrite, when God takes away his soul?” Job xxvii, 8 ; then there is an end for ever of this hope : indeed the hope of the righteous hath an end, but then it is not a destructive, but a perfective end ; this hope ends in fruition, others in frustration, Prov. x, 28. The godly must say at death, “It is finished ;” but the wicked, “It is perished ;” and in too sad earnest himself, as Job in a mistake ; where is now my hope ? He hath destroyed me, I am gone, and my hope is removed like a tree, Job xix, 10. The righteous hath hope in his death, Prov. xiv, 33. When nature is dying, his hopes are living, when his body is languishing, his hopes are flourishing ; his hope is a living hope, 1 Pet. i, 3, but the other’s is a dying, a

damning, soul-undoing hope. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish, and the hope of unjust men perisheth," Prov. xi, 7. "It shall be cut off, and prove like the spider's web," Job viii, 14, which he spins out of his own bowels; but then comes death with the broom and takes down all, and so there is an eternal end of his confidence wherein he trusted; "For the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost," Job xi, 20. Wicked men are fixed in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it; they hold it fast, they will not let it go; yea, but death will knock off all their fingers; though we cannot undeceive them, death and judgment will: when death strikes his dart through thy liver, it will pierce thy soul and hopes together. The unsanctified have hopes only in this life, 1 Cor. xv, 19, and therefore "are of all men most miserable." When death comes, it lets them out into the amazing gulf of endless desperation. 3. "There is a blasphemy in it." To hope we shall be saved, though we continue unconverted, is to hope we shall prove God a liar. He hath told you, that so merciful and pitiful as he is, he will never save you notwithstanding, if you go on in ignorance or a course of unrighteousness, Isaiah xxvii, 11; 1 Cor. vi, 9. In a word, he hath told you, that whatever you be or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation, without you "become new creatures," Gal. vi, 15. Now, to say God is merciful, and we hope will save us

nevertheless, is in effect to say, “ We hope God will not do as he says.” We must not set God’s attributes at variance ; God is resolved to glorify his mercy, but not to the prejudice of his truth, as the presumptuous sinner will find to his everlasting sorrow.

Objection. Why, but we hope *in* Jesus Christ, we put our whole trust *in* God, and therefore doubt not but we shall be saved.

Answer, 1. “ This is not to hope *in* Christ but *against* Christ.” To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again, to hope to find eternal life in the broad way, is to hope Christ will prove a false prophet. It is David’s plea, “ I hope *in* thy word,” Psalm cxix, 81, but this hope is against the word. Show me a word of Christ for thy hope, that he will save thee in thy ignorance or profane neglect of his service, and will never go to shake thy confidence.

2. “ God doth with abhorrence reject this hope.” Those condemned in the prophet went on in their sins, yet, saith the text, “ They will lean upon the Lord,” Mic. iii, 11. God will not endure to be made a prop to men in their sins : the Lord rejected those presumptuous sinners that went on still in their trespasses, and yet could stay themselves upon *Israel’s* God, Isa. xviii, 1, 2, as a man should shake off the briers (as one said well) that cleave to his garment.

3. “ If thy hope be any thing worth it will purify thee from thy sins,” 1 John iii, 3 ; but

cursed is that hope that cherishes men in their sins.

Objection. Would you have us to despair?

Answer. You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are, Acts ii, 37; that is, while you remain unconverted. You must despair of ever seeing the face of God without holiness: but you must by no means despair of finding mercy, upon your thorough repentance and conversion; neither may you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion in the use of God's means.

Fifthly, "Without this, all that God hath done and suffered, will be as to you in vain," John xiii, 8; Titus ii, 14; that is, it will no way avail to your salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hopes, that Christ died for sinners; but I must tell you, Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sinners, so continuing, 2 Tim. ii, 19. A great divine was wont, in his private dealings with souls, to ask two questions; 1st, What hath Christ done for you? 2d, What hath Christ wrought in you? Without the application of the Spirit in regeneration, we can have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, Christ himself cannot save you, if you go on in this state.

1. It were against his trust. The Mediator is the servant of the father, Isa. xlii, 1; shows his commission from him, acts in his name, and pleads his command for his justification, John x, 18, 26, and vi, 33, 40; and God "has com-

mitted all things unto him," intrusted his own glory and the salvation of souls with him, Matt. xii, 27 ; John xvii, 2. Accordingly Christ gives his Father an account of both parts of his trust before he leaves the world, John xvii, 4, 6, 12. Now Christ would quite cross his Father's glory, his greatest trust, if he should save men in their sins ; for this were to overturn all his counsels, and to offer violence to all his attributes.

First, "To overturn all his counsels," of which this is the order, that men should be brought "through sanctification to salvation," 2 Thess. ii, 13. "He hath chosen them that they should be holy," Eph. i, 4. They are chosen to life through sanctification, 1 Pet. i, 2. If thou canst repeal the law of God's immutable counsel, or corrupt him whom the Father hath sealed, to go directly against his commission, then, and not otherwise, mayest thou get to heaven in this condition. To hope that Christ will save thee while unconverted, is to hope that Christ will falsify his trust. Be assured, Christ will save none in a way contrary to his Father's will.

Secondly, "To offer violence to all his attributes." 1. "To his justice;" for the righteousness of God's judgments lies in "rendering to all according to their works," Rom. ii, 5, 6. Now should men "sow to the flesh, and yet of the Spirit reap everlasting life," Gal. vi, 7, 8, where were the glory of Divine justice, since it should be given to the wicked according to the

work of the righteous ? 2. "To his holiness." If God should not only save sinners, but save them in their sins, his most pure and strict holiness would be exceedingly defaced : the unsanctified is, in the eyes of God's holiness, worse than a swine or viper, Matt. xii, 34 ; 2 Pet. ii, 22. It would be offering the extremest violence to the infinite purity of the Divine nature to have such to dwell with him ; they cannot stand in his judgment, "they cannot abide his presence," Psa. i, 5, and v, 4, 5. If holy David would not endure such in his house, no, nor his sight, Psa. cxxxii, 3, 7, can we think God will ? 3. "To his veracity." For God hath declared from heaven, that "if any shall say he shall have peace, though he go on in the imagination of his heart, his wrath shall smoke against that man," Deut. xxix, 19, 20 ; that "they (only) that confess and forsake their sins shall find mercy," Prov. xxviii, 14 ; that "they that shall enter into his hill must be of clean hands and a pure heart," Psalm xxiv, 3, 4. Where were God's truth, if, notwithstanding all this, he should bring men to salvation without conversion ? O desperate sinner ! that darest to hope that Christ will lie to his Father and falsify his word to save thee. 4. "To his wisdom." For this were to throw away the choicest mercies on them who would not value them, nor were any way suited to them.

First, "They would not value them." The impenitent sinner puts but little price upon God's great salvation, Matt. xxii, 5. He sets

no more by Christ than the whole by the physician, Matt. ix, 12. He prizes not his balm, values not his cure, tramples upon his blood, Heb. x, 29. Now would it stand with wisdom to force pardon and life upon those who would give no thanks for them ? Would the all-wise God, when he hath forbidden us to do it, " throw his holy things to dogs, and his pearls to swine, and would, as it were, but turn again and rend him ?" Matt. vii, 6. This would make mercy to be despised indeed. Wisdom requires that eternal life be given in a way suitable to God's honour, and that God should secure his own glory as well as man's felicity. God would lose the praise and glory of his grace, if he should cast it away on them that were not only unworthy but unwilling.

Secondly, "They are noways suited to them." The Divine wisdom is seen suiting things to each other, the means to the end, the object to the faculty, the quality of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Alas ! what should an unsanctified creature do in heaven ? He could take no content there, because nothing suits him ; the place doth not suit him ; he would be quite out of his element ; the company doth not suit him : "What communion hath darkness with light," corruption with perfection, filth and rottenness with glory and immortality ? The employment doth not suit him ; the anthems of heaven fit not his mouth, please not his ear. Canst thou charm thy beast with music ? Or wilt thou bring him to thy organ, and

expect that he should make thee melody, or keep time with the tuneful choir ? Spread thy tables with delicates before a languishing patient, and it will give him great offence. Alas ! if the poor man thinks the sermon long, and says of the Sabbath, " What a weariness is it !" Mal. i, 31 ; how miserable would he think it to be held to it to all eternity ?

5. " To his immutability, or else to his omniscience or omnipotency :" For this is enacted in the conclave of heaven, and enrolled in the decrees of the court above, that " none but the pure in heart shall ever see God," Matt. v, 8. This is laid up with him, and sealed among his treasures. Now, if Christ yet bring any to heaven unconverted, either he must get them in without his Father's knowledge, (and then where is his omniscience ?) or against his will, (and then where is his omnipotency ?) or he must change his will, (and then where is his immutability ?)

Sinner, wilt thou not give up thy vain hope of being saved in this condition ? Saith Bildad, " Shall the earth be forsaken for thee ? or the rocks moved out of their place ?" Job xviii, 4. May I not much more reason so with thee ? Shall the laws of heaven be reversed for thee ? Shall the everlasting foundations be overturned for thee ? Shall Christ put out the eye of his Father's omniscience, or shorten the arm of his eternal power for thee ? Shall Divine justice be violated for thee ? Or the brightness of the glory of his holiness be blemished for thee ?

O the impossibility, absurdity, and blasphemy, that is in such a confidence ! To think Christ will ever save thee in this condition is to make thy Saviour to become a sinner, and to do more wrong to the infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth, or devils in hell, ever did, or could do ; and yet wilt thou not give up such a blasphemous hope ?

II. " Against his word." We need not say, " Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above ? Or who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath ? The word is nigh us," Rom. x, 6, 7, 8. Are you agreed that Christ shall end the controversy ? Hear then his own words : " Except you be converted you shall in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii, 3. " You must be born again," John iii, 7. " If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me," John xii, 8. " Repent or perish," Luke xiii, 3. One word, one would think, were enough from Christ, but how often and earnestly doth he reiterate it ! " Verily, verily, except a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God," John iii, 3, 5. Yea, he doth not only assert, but prove the necessity of the new birth, John iii, 6 ; without which man is no more fit for the kingdom of heaven than a beast is for the king's presence chamber. And wilt thou yet believe thy own presumptuous confidence, directly against Christ's words ? He must go quite against the law of his kingdom and rule of his judgment, to save thee in this state.

III. "Against his oath." He hath lifted up his hand to heaven, he hath sworn that those that remain in unbelief, and know not his ways, that is, are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them, "shall not enter into his rest," Psalm xcv, 11; Heb. iii, 11. And wilt thou not yet believe, O sinner, that he is in earnest? Canst thou hope he will be forsaken for thee? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath, and sealed by the blood, Heb. vi, 17, and ix, 16, 18, 19; Matt. xxvi, 28; but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out, if thou be saved living and dying unsanctified. Men cannot be saved while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made, and the whole frame of the Gospel, which was established for ever with such dreadful solemnities, quite altered: and would not they be distracted to hope that they shall?

IV. "Against his honour." God will so show his love to the sinner, as withal to show his hatred to sin; therefore "he that names the name of Jesus must depart from iniquity," 2 Tim. ii, 19, and deny all ungodliness. And he that hath hope of life by Christ, must "purify himself as he is pure," 1 John iii, 3; Tit. ii, 12; otherwise Christ would be thought a favourer of sin. The Lord Jesus would have all the world to know, that though he *pardons* sin, he will not *protect* it. If holy David shall say, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity," Psa. vi, 8, and shall shut the *doors* against them, Psalm ci, 7; shall not such much more expect it from

Christ's holiness? Would it be to his honour to have the dogs to the table, or lodge the swine with his children, or to have Abraham's bosom to be a nest of vipers?

V. "Against his offices." God hath exalted him "to be a Prince and a Saviour," Acts v, 31. He would act against both, should he save men in their sins: it is the office of a king "to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well," Rom. xiii, 3, 4. "He is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him that doeth evil." Now, should Christ favour the ungodly, (so continuing,) and take those to reign with him "that would not that he should reign over them," Luke xix, 27; this would be quite against his office. He therefore reigns that he may "put his enemies under his feet,"—1 Cor. xv, 25. Now, should he lay them in his bosom, he would cross the end of his regal power: it belongs to Christ, as a king, to subdue the hearts and slay the lusts of his people, Psalm xlv, 5, and cx, 3. What king would take rebels in open hostility into his court! What were this but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If Christ be a king, he must have honour, homage, subjection, &c., Mal. i, 6. Now to save men while in their natural enmity, were to obscure his dignity, lose his authority, bring contempt on his government, and sell his dear-bought rights for nought.

Again: as Christ would not be a Prince, so neither a Saviour, if he should do this; for his

salvation is spiritual: he is called Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins, Matt. i, 21; so that should he save them in their sins, he would neither be Lord nor Jesus. To save men from the punishment, and not from the power of sin, were to do his work by halves, and be an imperfect Saviour. His office, as the deliverer, is "to turn away ungodliness from Jacob," Romans xi, 26. He "is sent to bless men in turning them from their iniquities," Acts iii, 26. "To make an end of sin," Dan. ix, 25, so that he should destroy his own designs, and nullify his offices, to save men abiding in their unconverted state.

APPLICATION. Arise then: what meanest thou, O sleeper! Awake, O secure sinner! lest thou be consumed in thine iniquities; say as the lepers, "If we sit here we shall die," 2 Kings vii, 3, 4. Verily, it is not more certain that thou art now out of hell, than that thou shalt speedily be in it, except thou repent and be converted; there is but this one door for thee to escape by. Arise then, O sluggard, and shake off thine excuses; how long wilt thou slumber, and fold thy hands to sleep? Prov. vi, 10, 11. Wilt thou lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of the mast? Prov. xxiii, 34. There is no remedy, but thou must either turn or burn. There is an unchangeable necessity of the change of thy condition, except thou art resolved to abide the worst of it, and try it out with the Almighty. If thou lovest thy life, O man, arise and come away. Methinks I see

the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hands of a holy violence upon thee ; methinks he carries it like the angels to Lot, Genesis xix, 15, &c.— “ Then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, lest thou be consumed. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, the Lord being merciful unto him, and brought him without the city, and said, Escape for thy life, stay not in all the plain, escape to the mountains, lest thou be consumed.”

O, how wilful will thy destruction be, if thou shouldst yet harden thyself in thy sinful state ! But none of you can say but you have had fair warning. Yet methinks I cannot tell how to leave you so. It is not enough for me to have delivered my own soul. What ! shall I go away without my errand ? Will none of you arise and follow me ? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind ? Have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the troubled ocean with arguments ? Do I speak to the trees and rocks, or to men ? To the tombs and monuments of the dead, or to a living auditory ? If you be men, and not senseless stocks, stand still and consider whither you are going : if you have the reason and understanding of men, dare not to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open, but bethink yourselves, and set to the work of repentance. What ! men, and yet run into the pit, when the very beasts would not be forced in ! What, endowed with reason, and yet dally with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty ! Are men herein

distinguished from the very brutes, that they have no foresight of and care to provide for the things to come: and will you not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O! show yourselves men, and let reason prevail with you: is it a reasonable thing for you to "contend against the Lord your Maker?" Isa. xiv, 9, or to harden yourselves against his word," Job ix, 4, as though "the Strength of Israel would lie?" 1 Sam. xv, 29. Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose, yea, live quite against the very end of his being, and be as a broken pitcher only fit for the dunghill? Is it reasonable that the only thing in this world that God hath made capable of knowing his will, and bringing him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to his use? Yea, should be engaged against him, and spit his venom in the face of his Creator? "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," and let the creatures without sense be judge if this be reason, that man whom God hath "nourished and brought up, should rebel against him," Isaiah i, 2. Judge in your own selves: is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire? Isaiah xxvii, 4, or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with its Maker? You will say, This is not reason, or surely the eye of reason is quite put out: and if this be not reason, then there is no reason that you should continue as you are, but it is all the reason in the world you should forthwith turn and repent.

What shall I say ? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would hearken to me ! That you would presently set upon a new course ! Will you be made clean ? when shall it once be ? What ! will nobody be persuaded ? Reader, shall I prevail with thee for one ? wilt thou sit down and consider the forementioned argument, and debate it, whether it be not best to turn : come, and let us reason together : is it good for thee to be here ? wilt thou sit till the tide comes in upon thee ? is it good for thee to try whether God will be so good as his word, and to harden thyself in a conceit that all is well with thee while thou remainest unsanctified ?

But I know you will not be persuaded, but the greatest part will be as they have been and do as they have done. I know the drunkard will turn to his vomit again, and the deceiver to his deceit again, and the lustful wanton to his dalliance again. Alas ! that I must leave you where you were, in your ignorance or looseness, or in your lifeless formality and customary devotions ! However, I will sit down and bemoan my fruitless labours, and spend some sighs over my perishing hearers.

O distracted sinners ! What will their end be ? What will they do in the day of visitation ? " Whither will they flee for help ? Where will they leave their glory ?" Isa. x, 3. How powerfully hath sin bewitched them ! how effectually hath the god of this world blinded them ! how strong is the delusion ! how uncircumcised

their ears ! how obdurate their hearts ! Satan hath them at his beck. But how long may I call, and can get no answer ? I may dispute with them year after year, and they will give me the hearing, and that is all ; they must and will have their sins, say what I will ; though I tell them there is death in the cup ; yet they will take it up ; though I tell them it is the broad way, and endeth in destruction, yet they will go on in it ; I warn them, yet cannot win them. Sometimes I think the mercies of God will melt them, and his winning invitations will overcome them ; but I find them as they were : sometimes that the terror of the Lord will persuade them ; yet neither will this do. They will approve the word, like the sermon, commend the preacher, but they will yet live as they did. They will not deny me, and yet they will not obey me. They will flock to the word of God, and sit before me as his people, and hear my words, but they will not do them. They value and will plead for ministers, and I am to them as the lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, yet I cannot get them to come under Christ's yoke. They love me, and will be ready to say they will do any thing for me ; but, for my life, I cannot persuade them to leave their sins, to forego their evil company, their intemperance, their unjust gains, &c. I cannot prevail with them to set up prayer in their families, and closets, yet they will promise me, like the froward son, that said, "I go, sir, but went not," Matt. xxi, 30. I cannot persuade them to learn

the principles of religion, though else, “they would die without knowledge,” Job xxxvi, 12. I tell them their misery, but they will not believe but it is well enough : if I tell them particularly, I fear for such reasons their estate is bad, they will judge me censorious ; or if they be at present a little awakened, are quickly lulled asleep by Satan again, and have lost the sense of all.

Alas, for my poor hearers ! Must they perish at last by hundreds, when ministers would so fain save them ? What course shall I use with them, that I have not tried ? “What shall I do for the daughter of my people ?” Jer. ix, 7. O Lord God, help. Alas ! shall I leave them thus ? If they will not hear me, yet do thou hear me : O that they may yet live in thy sight ! Lord, save them, or else they perish. My heart would melt to see their houses on fire about their ears, when they were fast asleep in their beds ; and shall not my soul be moved within me to see them falling into endless perdition ? Lord, have compassion, and save them out of the burning ; put forth thy Divine power, and the work will be done : but as for me, I cannot prevail.

CHAPTER IV.

Showing the marks of the unconverted.

WHILE we keep aloof in general, there is little fruit to be expected ; it is the hand fight that doth

execution. David is not awakened by the prophet's hovering at a distance in parabolical insinuations ; he is forced to close with him, and tell him plainly, "Thou art the man." Few will in words deny the necessity of the new birth, but they have a self-deluding confidence that the work is not now to do. And because they know themselves free from that gross hypocrisy which takes up religion merely for a colour to deceive others, and for covering of wicked designs, they are confident of their sincerity, and suspect not that more close hypocrisy (wherein the greatest danger lies,) by which a man deceiveth his own soul, James i, 26. But man's deceitful heart is such a matchless cheat and self-delusion, so reigning and so fatal a disease, that I know not whether be the greater, the difficulty, disagreeableness, or the necessity of the undeceiving work that I am now upon. Alas, for my unconverted hearers ! They must be undeceived or undone. But how shall this be effected ?

"Help, O all-searching Light, and let thy discerning eye discover the rotten foundation of the self-deceiver ; and lead me, O Lord God, as thou didst the prophet, into the chambers of imagery, and dig through the wall of sinners' hearts, and discover the hidden abominations that are lurking out of sight in the dark. O send thy angel before me, to open the sundry wards of their hearts, as thou didst before Peter, and make even the iron gates to fly open of their own accord. And, as Jonathan no sooner tasted

the honey but his eyes were enlightened; so grant, O Lord, that when the poor deceived souls, with whom I have to do, shall cast their eyes upon these lines, their minds may be illuminated, and their consciences convinced and awakened, that they may see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and be converted, and thou mayest heal them."

This must be premised before we proceed to the discovery, that it is most certain men may have a confident persuasion that their hearts and states be good, and yet be unsound. Hear the Truth himself, who shows in Laodicea's case, that men may be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked," and yet not know it; yea, they may be confident they are "rich, and increased in grace," Rev. iii, 17. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness," Prov. xxx, 12. Who better persuaded of his case than Paul, while he yet remained unconverted? Rom. vii, 9. So that they are miserably deceived that take a strong confidence for a sufficient evidence. They that have no better proof than barely a strong persuasion that they are converted, are certainly as yet strangers to conversion.

But to come more close; as it was said of the adherents to antichrist, so here; some of the unconverted carry their marks in their foreheads, more openly, and some in their hands, more covertly. The apostle reckons up some upon whom he writes the sentence of death;

as in these dreadful catalogues, which I beseech you to attend to with all diligence : Eph. v, 5, 6, " For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words, for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Rev. xxi, 8, " But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone ; which is the second death." 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10, " Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." See Galatians v, 19-21. Wo to them that have their names written in these black rolls ; such may know, as certainly as if God had told them from heaven, that they are unsanctified, and under an impossibility of being saved in this condition.

There are then these several sorts that (past all dispute) are unconverted ; they carry their marks in their foreheads.

1. The *unclean*. These are ever reckoned among the *goats*, and have their names, whoever is left out, in all the before-mentioned catalogues, Eph. v, 5 ; Rev. xxi, 8 ; 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10.

2. *The covetous.* These are ever branded for *idolaters*, and the doors of the kingdom are shut against them by name, Eph. v, 5 ; Col. iii, 5 ; 1 Cor. vi, 6, 10.

3. *Drunkards.* Not only such as drink away their reason, but withal (yea above all) such as are too strong even for strong drink : the Lord fills his mouth with woes against these, and declares they "have no inheritance in the kingdom of God," Isa. v, 11, 12, 22 ; Gal. v, 21.

4. *Liars.* The God that cannot lie has told them that there is no place for them in his kingdom, no entrance into his hill ; but their portion is with the father of lies, whose children they are, in the lake of burnings, Psa. xv, 1, 2 ; Rev. xxi, 8, 27 ; John viii, 44 ; Prov. vi, 17.

5. *Swearers.* The end of these, without deep and speedy repentance, is swift destruction, and most certain and unavoidable condemnation, Jas. v, 12 ; Zech. v, 1, 2, 3.

6. *Railers* and *backbiters*, that love to take up a reproach against their neighbour, and fling all the dirt they can in his face, or else wound him secretly behind his back, Psalm xv, 1, 3 ; 1 Cor. vi, 10, and v, 11.

7. *Thieves, extortioners, and oppressors*, that grind the poor, overreach their brethren when they have them at an advantage ; these must know that "God is the avenger of all such," 1 Thess. iv, 6. Hear, O ye false, and purloining, and wasteful servants ; hear, O ye deceitful tradesmen ; hear your sentence : God will certainly hold his door against you, and turn

your treasures of unrighteousness into treasures of wrath, and make your ill-gotten silver and gold to torment you, like burning metal in your bowels, 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10 ; James vi, 2, 3.

8. "All that do ordinarily live in the profane neglect of God's *worship* ;" that hear not his word, that call not on his name, that restrain prayer before God, that mind not their own nor their families' souls, but "live without God in the world," John viii, 47 ; Job xv, 4 ; Psa. xiv, 4, and lxxix, 6 ; Eph. ii, 12, and iv, 18.

9. "Those that are frequenters and lovers of *company*." God has declared he will be the destroyer of all such, and that they shall never enter into the hill of his rest, Prov. xiii, 20, and ix, 6 ; Psalm xv, 4.

10. *Scorners* at religion, that make a scorn of precise walking, and mock at the messengers and diligent servants of the Lord, and at their holy profession, and make themselves merry with the weakness and failings of professors. Hear, ye despisers, your dreaded doom, Prov. xix, 29, and iii, 34 ; 2 Chron. xxxvi, 16.

Sinner, consider diligently whether thou art not to be found in one of these ranks ; for if this be thy case, "thou art in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity ;" for all these do carry their marks in their foreheads, and are undoubtedly the sons of death. And if so, the Lord pity our poor congregations ! O how small a number will be left when these ten sorts are taken out ! Alas ! on how many doors, on how many faces, must we write, "Lord, have mercy

on us?" Sirs, what shift do you make to keep up your confidence of your good state, when God from heaven declares against and pronounces you in a state of damnation? I would reason with you as God with them, "How canst thou say, I am not polluted?" Jer. ii, 23. "See thy way in the valley, know what thou hast done." Man, is not thy conscience privy to thy tricks of deceit, to thy chamber pranks, to thy way of lying? Yea, are not thy friends, thy family, thy neighbours, witness to thy profane neglect of God's worship, to thy covetous practices, to thy envious and malicious carriage? May they not point at thee as thou goest, There goes a gaming prodigal; there goes a drunken Nabal, a companion of evil doers; there goes a railer, a scoffer, or a loose liver. Beloved, God hath written it with a sunbeam in the book by which you must be judged, that these are not the spots of his children, and that none such, except renewed by converting grace, shall ever escape the damnation of hell.

O that such as you would now be persuaded to "repent and turn from all your transgressions, or else iniquity will be your ruin!" Ezek. xviii, 30. Alas, for poor hardened sinners!—Must I leave you at last where you were? Must I leave the tippler still at the ale bench? Must I leave the wanton still at his dalliance? Must I leave the malicious still in his venom, and the drunkard still at his vomit? However, you must know that you have been warned, and that I am clear of your blood. And "whether men will

hear, or whether they will forbear," I will leave the Scriptures with them, either as thunderbolts to awaken them, or as searing irons to harden them to a reprobate sense. Psalm lxviii, 21, "God shall wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such a one as goes on still in his trespasses." Prov. xxix, 1, "He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Chap. i, 24, &c., "Because I have called and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded, &c. I will mock at your calamity, when your destruction cometh as a whirlwind."

And now I imagine many will begin to bless themselves, and think all is well because they cannot be charged with the grosser evils before mentioned; but I must farther tell you, that there are another sort of unsanctified persons, that carry not their marks in their foreheads; but more secretly and covertly in their hands; these do frequently deceive themselves and others, and pass for good Christians, when they are all the while unsound at bottom. Many pass undiscovered till death and judgment bring all to light. Those self-deceivers seem to come even to heaven's gate with full confidence of their admission, and yet are shut out at last, Matt. vii, 22.

Brethren beloved, I beseech you deeply to lay to heart, and firmly retain, this awakening consideration, that multitudes miscarry by cherishing some secret sin, that is not only hidden

from others, but, for want of searching their own hearts, even from themselves. A man may be free from open pollutions, and yet perish at last by some secret unobserved iniquity. And there be these twelve hidden sins, through which souls go down by numbers into the chambers of death ; these you must search carefully for, and note them as black marks, wherever they be found, discovering a graceless and unconverted state. And as you love your lives, read carefully with a holy jealousy of yourselves, lest you should be the persons concerned.

1. "Gross ignorance." O how many poor souls doth this sin kill in the dark ! Hos. iv, 6 ; while they think verily they have good hearts, and are in the ready way to heaven ! This is the murderer that despatches thousands in a silent manner, when, poor hearts ! they suspect nothing, and see not the hand that destroys them. You shall find, whatever excuses you have for ignorance, that it is a soul-undoing evil, Isa. xxvii, 11 ; 2 Thess. i, 8 ; 2 Cor. iv, 3. Ah ! would it not have grieved a man's heart to have seen that woful spectacle, when the poor Protestants were shut up, a multitude together, in a barn, and a butcher comes with cruel hands, warmed in human blood, and leads them one by one, blindfold, to a block where he slew them, poor innocents ! one after another, by scores, in cold blood ! But how much more should your hearts bleed to think of the hundreds in great congregations that ignorance doth butcher in secret, and lead blindfold to the

block? Beware this be none of your cases. Make no plea for ignorance; if you spare that sin, know that it will not spare you; and would a man take a murderer to his bosom?

2. "Secret reserves in closing with Christ." To forsake all for Christ, to "hate father and mother, yea, a man's own life," for him, "This is a *hard saying*," Luke xiv, 26. Some will do much, but they will not be of the religion that will undo them; they never come to be entirely devoted to Christ, nor fully to resign to him: they must have the sweet sin; they mean to do themselves no harm; they have secret exceptions, for life, liberty, or estate. Many take Christ thus, hand over head, and never consider his self-denying terms, nor cast up the cost; and this error in the foundation mars all, and secretly ruins them for ever, Luke xiv, 28; Matt. xviii, 21.

3. "Formality in religion." Many stick in the dark, and rest in the outside of religion, and in the external performances of holy duties, Matt. xxiii, 25, and this oftentimes doth most effectually deceive men, and doth more certainly undo them than open looseness, as it was in the Pharisee's case, Matt. xxiii, 31. They hear, they fast, they pray, they give alms, and therefore will not believe but their case is good, Luke xviii, 31: whereas, resting in the work done, and coming short of heart work, and the inward power and life of religion, they fall at last into the burning, from the flattering hopes and confident persuasions of their being in the ready

way to heaven, Matt. vii, 22, 23. O dreadful case, when a man's religion shall serve only to harden him, and effectually to delude and deceive his own soul !

4. "The prevalence of false ends in holy duties," Matt. xxiii, 25. This was the bane of the Pharisee. O how many poor souls are undone by this, and drop into hell before they discern their mistake ! They perform good duties, and so think all is well ; but perceive not that they are actuated by carnal motives all the while. When the main thing that doth ordinarily carry a man out to religious duties shall be really some carnal end, as to satisfy his conscience, to get the repute of being religious, "to be seen of men," to show his own gifts and parts, to avoid the reproach of being a profane and irreligious person, or the like : this discovers an unsound heart, Hos. x, 1 ; Zech. vii, 3, 6. O professor ! if you would avoid self-deceit, see that you mind not only your acts, but withal, yea, above all, your ends.

5. "Trusting in your own righteousness," Luke xviii, 9. This is a soul-undoing mischief, Rom. x, 3. When men do trust in their own righteousness they do indeed reject Christ's. Beloved, you had need be watchful on every hand : for not only your sins but your duties may undo you. It may be you never thought of this : but so it is, that a man may as certainly miscarry by his seeming righteousness and supposed graces, as by gross sins ; and that is, when a man doth trust in these as his righteous-

ness before God, for the sanctifying his justice, appeasing his wrath, procuring his favour, and obtaining of his own pardon ; for this is to put Christ out of office, and make a saviour of our own duties and graces. Beware of this, O professors ! You are much in duties : but this one fly will spoil all the ointment. When you have done most and best, be sure to go out of yourselves to Christ, Psa. cxlii, 2 ; Phil. iii, 9 ; Isa. lxiv, 6 ; Neh. xiii, 22.

6. “A secret enmity against the strictness of religion.” Many moral persons, punctual to their formal devotion, have a bitter enmity against preciseness, and hate the life and power of religion, Phil. iii, 6, compared with Acts ix, 1. They like not this forwardness, nor that men should keep such a stir in religion ; they condemn the strictness of religion as singularity, indiscretion, and intemperate zeal ; and with them a lively preacher or a lively Christian, is but a heady fellow. These men love not holiness as holiness, for then they would love the height of holiness, and therefore are undoubtedly rotten at heart, whatever good opinion they have of themselves.

7. “The resting in a certain pitch of religion.” When they have so much as will save them (as they suppose) they look no farther, and so show themselves short of true grace, which will ever put men upon aspiring to farther perfection, Phil. iii, 13 ; Prov. iv, 18.

8. “The predominant love of the world.” This is the sure evidence of an unsanctified heart, Mark x, 22 ; 1 John ii, 15.

But how close doth this sin lurk oftentimes under the fair covert of forward profession ? Luke viii, 14. Yea, such a power of deceit is there in this sin, that many times, when every body else can see the man's worldliness and covetousness, he cannot see it himself, but hath so many colours, and excuses, and pretences for his eagerness on the world, that he doth blind his own eyes, and perish in his self-deceit. How many professors be there, with whom the world hath more of their hearts and affections than Christ : " who mind earthly things," and thereby are evidently after the flesh, and like to end in destruction ! Rom. vii, 5 ; Phil. iii, 19. Yet ask these men, and they will tell you confidently they prize Christ above all ; God forbid else ! and see not their own earthly mindedness, for want of a narrow observation of the working of their own hearts. Did they but carefully search, they would quickly find that their greatest content is in the world, Luke xii, 19, and their greatest care and main endeavour is to get and secure the world ; which are the certain discoveries of an unconverted sinner. May the professing part of the world take earnest heed that they perish not by the hand of this sin, unobserved. Men may be, and often are kept off from Christ as effectually by the inordinate love of lawful comforts, as by the most unlawful courses, Matt. xii, 5 ; Luke xiv, 10, 24.

9. " Reigning malice and envy against those that disrespect them, and are injurious to them," 1 John ii, 9, 11. O how do many that seem

to be religious, remember injuries and carry grudges, and will return men as good as they bring, rendering evil for evil, loving to take revenge, wishing evil to them that wrong them, directly against the rule of the Gospel, the pattern of Christ, and the nature of God, Rom. xii, 14, 17 ; 1 Peter ii, 21, 23 ; Neh. ix, 17.—Doubtless where this evil is kept boiling in the heart, and is not hated, resisted, mortified, but doth habitually prevail, that person is in the very gall of bitterness, and in a state of death, Matt. xviii, 34, 35 ; 1 John iii, 14, 15.

Reader, doth nothing of this touch thee ?—Art thou in none of the fore-mentioned ranks ? O search, and search again ; take thy heart solemnly to task ; wo unto thee, if after thy profession thou shouldest be found under the power of ignorance, lost in formality, drowned in earthly mindedness, envenomed with malice, exalted in an opinion of thine own righteousness, leavened with hypocrisy and carnal ends in God's service, embittered against strictness ; this would be a sad discovery that all thy religion were in vain. But I must proceed.

10. “Unmortified pride.” When men love the praise of men more than the praise of God, and set their hearts upon men's esteem, applause, and approbation, it is most certain they are yet in their sins, and strangers to true conversion, John xii, 43 ; Gal. i, 10. O how secretly doth this sin live and reign in many hearts, but they know it not, but are very strangers to themselves ! John ix, 40.

11. "The prevailing love of pleasure," 2 Tim. iii, 4. This is a black mark. When men give the flesh the liberty that it craves, and pamper and please it, and do not deny and restrain it; when their great delight is in gratifying their bellies and pleasing their senses;—whatever appearances they may have of religion, all is unsound, Rom. xvi, 18; Tit. iii, 3. A flesh-pleasing life cannot be pleasing to God. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh," and are careful to cross it and keep it under as their enemy, Gal. v, 24; 1 Cor. ix, 25, 27.

12. "Carnal security, or a presumptuous ungrounded confidence that their condition is already good," Rev. iii, 16. Many cry, peace and safety, when sudden destruction is coming upon them, 1 Thess. v, 3; this was that which kept the foolish virgins sleeping when they should have been working; upon their beds when they should have been at the markets, Matt. xxv, 5, 10; Prov. x, 5. They perceived not their want of oil till the bridegroom was come; and while they went to buy, the door was shut. And, O that these foolish virgins had no successors! Where is the place, yea, where is the house almost, where these do not dwell? Men are willing to cherish in themselves, upon ever so light grounds, a hope that their condition is good, and so look not out after a change, and by this means perish in their sins. Are you at peace? Show me upon what grounds your peace is maintained. Is it Scripture peace? Can you show the distinguishing

marks of a sound believer? Can you evidence that you have something more than any hypocrite in the world ever had? If not, fear this peace more than any trouble; and know, that a carnal peace doth commonly prove the most mortal enemy of the poor soul; and while it smiles, and kisses, and speaks fair, doth fatally smite it, as it were, under the fifth rib.

By this time, methinks, I hear my readers crying out with the disciples, "Who then shall be saved?" Set out from among our congregations all those ten ranks of the profane on one hand, and then beside, take out all the twelve sorts of close and self-deceiving hypocrites on the other hand, and tell me then whether it be not a remnant that shall be saved. How few will be the sheep that shall be left when all these shall be separated and set among the goats! For my part, of all my numerous hearers, I have no hope to see any of them in heaven, that are to be found among these two and twenty sorts that are here mentioned, except by sound conversion they are brought into another condition.

APPLICATION. And now, conscience, do thy office: speak out and speak home to him that heareth or readeth these lines. If thou find any of these marks upon him, thou must pronounce him utterly unclean, Lev. viii, 44.—Take not up a lie into thy mouth, speak not peace to him to whom God speaks no peace; let not lust bribe thee, or self-love, or carnal prejudice, blind thee. I subpoena thee from the

court of heaven to come and give in evidence : I require thee in the name of God to go with me to the search of the suspected house. As thou wilt answer it at thy peril, give in a true report of the state and case of him that readeth this book. Conscience, wilt thou altogether hold thy peace at such a time at this ? I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us the truth, Matt. xxvi, 63. Is the man converted, or is he not ? Doth he allow himself in any way of sin, or doth he not ? Doth he truly love, and please, and prize, and delight in God above all other things, or not ? Come, put it to an issue.

How long shall this soul live at uncertainties ? O conscience, bring in thy verdict. Is this man a new man, or is he not ? How dost thou find it ? Hath there passed a thorough and mighty change upon him, or not ? When was the time, where was the place, or what were the means by which this thorough change of the new birth was wrought in his soul ? Speak, conscience ; or if thou canst not tell time and place, canst thou show Scripture evidence that the work is done ? Hath the man been ever taken off from his false bottom, from the false hopes and false peace wherein once he trusted ? Hath he been deeply convinced of sin, and of his lost and undone condition, and brought out of himself, and off from his sins, to give up himself entirely to Jesus Christ ? Or, dost thou not find him to this very day under the power of ignorance, or in the mire of profaneness ? Hast thou not found upon him the gains of unright-

eousness? Dost thou not find him a stranger to prayer, a negleter of the word, a lover of this present world? Dost thou not often catch him in a lie? Dost thou not find his heart fermented with malice, or burning with lust, or going after his covetousness? Speak plainly to all the fore-mentioned particulars: canst thou acquit this man, this woman, from being any of the two and twenty sorts here described? If he be found with any of them, set him aside, his portion is not with the saints: he must be converted and made a new creature, or else he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

Beloved, be not your own betrayers, do not deceive your own hearts; nor set your hands to your own ruin, by a wilful binding of yourselves. Set up a tribunal in your own breasts, bring the word and conscience together: "To the law and to the testimony," Isaiah viii, 20; hear what the word concludes of your estates: O follow the search till you have found how the case stands; mistake here, and you perish.—And such is the treachery of the heart, the subtlety of the tempter, and the deceitfulness of sin, Jer. xvii, 9; 2 Cor. xi, 3; Heb. iii, 13; all conspire to flatter and deceive the poor soul; and withal so common and easy it is to be mistaken, that it is a thousand to one but you will be deceived, unless you be very careful and thorough and impartial in the inquiry into your spiritual condition: O! therefore ply your work, go to the bottom, search with candles, weigh you in the balance, come to the standard of the

sanctuary, bring your coin to the touchstone. You have the most arch cheats in the world to deal with, a world of counterfeit coin is going ; happy is he that takes no counterfeits for gold. Satan is master of deceit ; he can draw to the life, he is perfect in the trade, there is nothing but he can imitate.

You cannot wish for any grace, but he can fit you to a hair with a counterfeit. Trade warily, look on every piece you take, be jealous, trust not so much as your own hearts. Run to God to search you and try you ; to examine you and prove your reins, Psalm xxvi, 2, and cxxxix, 23, 24. If other helps suffice not to bring all to an issue, but you are still at a loss, open your cases faithfully to some godly and faithful minister, Mal. ii, 7 ; rest not till you have put the business of your eternal welfare out of the question, 1 Pet. ii, 10. O Searcher of hearts, put thou this soul upon, and help him in his search !

CHAPTER V.

Showing the miseries of the unconverted.

So unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought if I could but convince men that they are yet unregenerate, the work were in a measure done.

But I sadly experience, that such a spirit of sloth and slumber, Rom. xi, 8; Matt. xiii, 15,

possesseth the impenitent, that though they be convinced that they are yet unconverted, yet they oftentimes carelessly sit still ; and what through the avocation of sensual pleasures, or hurry of worldly business, or noise and clamour of earthly cares, and lusts, and affections, Luke vii, 14, the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no farther than some cold wishes and general purposes of repenting and amending. Acts xxiv, 15.

It is, therefore, of high necessity that I do not only convince men that they are unconverted, but that I also endeavour to bring them to a sense of the fearful misery of this state.

But here I find myself aground at first putting forth. What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery, unless it were Dives', in that flame ? Luke xvi, 24. Where is the ready writer, whose pen can decipher their misery that "are without God in the world ?" Eph. ii, 12. This cannot be fully done, unless we knew the infinite ocean of that bliss of perfection which is in God ; which a state of sin doth exclude men from. "Who knoweth," saith Moses, "the power of thine anger ?" Psa. xc, 11. And how shall I tell men that which I do not know ? Yet so much we know, as one would think would shake the heart of that man that hath the least degree of spiritual life and sense.

But this is yet the more posing difficulty, that I am to speak to them that are without sense. Alas ! this is not the least part of man's misery

upon him, that he is dead, stark dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii, 1.

Could I bring paradise into view or represent the kingdom of heaven to as much advantage as the tempter did the kingdoms of the world, and all the glory thereof, to our Saviour : or could I uncover the face of the deep and devouring gulf of Tophet, in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace, alas ! he hath no eyes to see it, Matt. xiii, 14, 15. Could I paint out the beauties of holiness, or glory of the Gospel to the life ; or could I bring above board the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin, he can no more judge of the loveliness and beauty of the one, and the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than a blind man of colours. He is alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him because of the blindness of his heart, Eph. iv, 18 ; he neither doth nor can know the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii, 14 ; his eyes cannot be savingly opened but by converting grace, Acts xxvi, 18 ; he is a child of darkness, and walks in darkness, 1 John i, 6 ; "yea, the light in him is darkness," Matt. vi, 3.

Shall I ring his knell, or read his sentence, or sound in his ear the terrible trump of God's judgments, that one would think should make both his ears to tingle, and strike him into Belshazzar's fit, even to appal his countenance, and loosen his joints, and make his knees smite one against another ? Yet, alas ! he perceives

me not, he hath no ears to hear. Or shall I call up the daughters of music, and sing the song of Moses and of the Lamb? Yet he will not be stirred. Shall I allure him with the joyful sound, and lovely song, and glad tidings of the Gospel, with the most sweet and inviting calls, comforts, and cordials of the Divine promises, so exceeding great and precious? It will not affect him savingly, unless I could find him ears, Matt. xiii, 15, as well as tell him the news.

Which way shall I come at the miserable objects that I have to deal with? Who shall make the heart of stone to relent? Zech. vii, 11, 12, or the carcass to feel and move? That God alone, who "is able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham," Matt. iii, 9; that raiseth the dead, 1 Cor. vi, 14, and "melteth the mountains," Neh. i, 5, and strikes water out of the flints, Deut. viii, 15; that loves to work like himself, beyond the hope and belief of man; that peopleth his Church with dry bones, and planteth his orchard with dry sticks; he is able to do this. "Therefore I bow my knee to the most high God," Eph. iii, 14; and as our Saviour prayed at the sepulchre of Lazarus, John xi, 38, 41, and the Shunamite to the man of God for her dead child, 2 Kings iv, 25; so doth your mourning minister kneel about your graves, and carry you in the arms of prayer to that God in whom your help is found.

"O thou all-powerful Jehovah, that worketh, and none can hinder thee! that hast the keys

of death and hell, pity thou the poor souls that lie here entombed, and roll away thy grave stones, and say as to Lazarus, Come forth : lighten thou this darkness, O inaccessible Light, and let the day-spring from on high visit the dark regions of the dead to whom I speak, for thou canst open the eyes that death itself hath closed ; thou that formedst the ear, canst restore the hearing : say thou to these ears, *Ephphatha*, and they shall be opened. Give thou eyes to see thine excellencies, a taste that may relish thy sweetness, a scent that may savour thine ointments, a feeling that may discern the privilege of thy favour, the burden of thy wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin ; and give thy servants order to prophesy to the dry bones ; and let the effects of this prophecy be as those of the prophet when he prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army, exceeding great," Ezek. xxxvii, 1, &c.

But I must proceed, as I am able, to unfold that mystery which, I confess, no tongue can fully unfold, no heart can thoroughly comprehend. Know, therefore, that while thou art unconverted,

1st. "The infinite God is engaged against thee." It is no small part of thy misery that thou art without God, Eph. ii, 12. How doth Micah run crying after the Danites, "Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I more ?" Judges xviii, 23, 24. O what a mourning then must thou lift up that art without God, that canst lay no claim to him without daring

patience ! Thou mayest say of God as Sheba of David, "We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse," 2 Sam. xx, 1. How pitiful and piercing a moan is that of Saul in his extremity ! "The Philistines are upon me, and God is departed from me !" 1 Sam. xxvii, 15. But what will you do, O sinners, in the day of visitation ? Whither will you flee for help ? Where will you leave your glory ? Isaiah x, 3. What will you do when the Philistines are upon you ; when the world shall take its eternal leave of you ; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands, farewell for evermore ? What will you do then, I say, that have no God to go to ? Will you call on him ? Will you cry to him for help ? Alas ! he will not own you, Prov. i, 28, 29. He will not take any notice of you, but send you away with, "I never knew you," Matt. vii, 23. They that know what it is to have a God to go to, a God to live upon, they know a little what a fearful misery it is to be without God. This made that holy man cry out, "Let me have a God or nothing. Let me know him and his will, and what will please him, and how I may come to enjoy him ; or would I had never an understanding to know any thing," &c.

But thou art not only without God, but God is against thee, Ezek. v, 8, 9 ; Nahum ii, 13. O ! if God would but stand neuter, though he did not own or help the poor sinner, his case were not so deeply miserable, though God should give up the poor creature to the will of his ene-

mies, to do their worst with him ; though he should deliver him over to the tormentors, Matt. xviii, 34, that devils should tear and torture him to their utmost power and skill, yet this were not half so fearful. But God will set himself against the sinner, and believe, “ it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,” Heb. x, 31 ; there is no friend like him, no enemy like him : as much as heaven is above the earth, omnipotency above impotency, infinity above nullity, so much more horrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears or lions, yea, furies or devils. God himself will be thy tormentor ; thy destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord, 2 Thess. 1, 9. “ Tophet is deep and large, and the wrath of the Lord, like a river of brimstone, doth kindle it,” Isa. xxx, 33. “ If God be against thee, who shall be for thee ? If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him ; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him ? 1 Sam. ix, 15. Thou, even thou art to be feared ; and who shall stand in thy sight when once thou art angry ?” Psa. lxxvi, 7. “ Who is that God that shall deliver you out of his hands ?” Daniel iii, 15. Can mammon ? “ Riches profit not in the day of wrath,” Prov. xi, 4. Can kings or warriors ? No : “ They shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb ; for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand ?” Rev. vi, 15. 17.

Sinner ! methinks this should go like a dagger to thy heart, to know that God is thine enemy : O whither wilt thou go ? where wilt thou shelter ? There is no hope for thee unless thou lay down thy weapons, and sue out thy pardon ; and get Christ to stand thy friend and make thy peace ; if it were not for this, thou mightest go into some howling wilderness, and there pine in sorrow, and run mad for anguish of heart, and horrible despair ; but in Christ there is a possibility of mercy for thee ; yea, a proffer of mercy to thee, that thou mayest have God more for thee than he is now against thee ; but if thou wilt not forsake thy sins, nor turn thoroughly, and to some purpose, to God, by a sound conversion, the wrath of God abideth on thee, and he proclaimeth himself to be against thee, as in the Prophet Ezekiel, chapter v, 8, "Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, am against thee."

I. "His face is against thee," Psalm xxxiv, 16. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them." Wo unto them whom God shall set his face against. When he did but look on the host of the Egyptians, how terrible was the consequence ? -Ezek. xiv, 8, "I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the Lord."

II. "His heart is against thee." He hateth all the workers of iniquity ; man, doth not thy

heart tremble to think of thy being an object of God's hatred ? Jer. xv, 1, " Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, yet my mind could not be toward this people ; cast them out of my sight." Zech. xi, 8, " My soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me."

III. " His hand is against thee," 1 Sam. xii, 14, 15. All his attributes are against thee.

First, His justice is like a flaming sword unsheathed against thee : " If I whet my glittering sword, and my hand take hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to mine adversaries, and will reward them that hate me ; I will make mine arrows drunk with blood," &c. Deut. xxxii, 40, 41.

So exact is justice, that it will by no means clear the guilty, Exod. xxxiv, 7. God will not discharge thee, " he will not hold thee guiltless," Exod. xx, 8 ; but will require the whole debt in person of thee ; unless thou canst make a Scripture claim to Christ, and his satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on justice, and sees the balance in which he is to be weighed, and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his breast : but Satan keeps this out of sight, and persuades the soul (while he can) that the Lord is all made up of mercy, and so lulls it asleep in sin. Divine justice is very strict, it must have satisfaction to the utmost farthing ; it denounceth indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul that doeth evil, Rom. ii, 8, 9. It curseth every one that continueth not in every thing that is

written in the law to do it, Gal. iii, 10. The justice of God to the unpardoned sinner, that hath a sense of his misery, is more terrible than the sight of the bailiff or creditor to the bankrupt debtor, or than the sight of the judge and bench to the robber, or of the irons and gibbet to the guilty murderer. When justice sits upon life and death, O what dreadful work doth it make with the wretched sinner ! "Bind him hand and foot, cast him into outer darkness ; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," Matt. xxii, 13. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire," Matthew xxv, 41. This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounceth. Why, sinner, by this severe justice must thou be tried ! And as God liveth, this killing sentence shalt thou hear, unless thou repent and be converted.

Secondly, "The holiness of God is full of antipathy against thee," Psa. v, 4, 5. He is not only angry with thee, but he hath a fixed, rooted, habitual displeasure against thee, "he loathes thee," Zech. xi, 8, and what is done by thee, though in substance commanded by him, Isa. i, 14 ; Mal. i, 10. God's nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and he cannot but hate a sinner out of Christ.

O what misery is this, to be out of the favour, yea, under the hatred of God ! Eccles. v, 6 ; Hos. ix, 15 : that God who can as easily lay aside his nature, and cease to be God, as not be contrary to thee, and detest thee, except thou be changed and renewed by grace. O sinner ! how dares thou to think of the bright and radiant

sun of purity, of the beauties, the glory of holiness, that is in God ! “ The stars are not pure in his sight,” Job xxv, 5. “ He humbles himself to behold things that are done in heaven,” Psalm cxiii, 6. O those light and sparkling eyes of his ! What do they spy in thee ? And thou hast no interest in Christ neither, that he should plead for thee. Methinks he should hear thee crying out (astonished) with the Bethshemites, “ Who shall stand before this Lord God ! ”

Thirdly, “ The power of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against thee.” The glory of God’s power is to be displayed in the wonderful confusion and destruction of them that obey not the Gospel, 2 Thess. i, 8, 9. O man ! Art thou able to make thy part good with thy Maker ? No more than a silly reed against the cedars of God, or a little cockboat against the tumbling ocean, or the children’s bubbles against the blustering winds.

Sinner, the power of God’s anger is against thee, Psalm xc, 11, and power and anger together make fearful work ; it were better thou hadst all the world in arms against thee, than to have the power of God against thee. There is no escaping his hands nor breaking his prison. “ The thunder of his power who can understand ? ” Job xxvi, 14. Unhappy man that shall understand it by feeling it ! “ If he will contend with him, he cannot answer him one of a thousand. He is wise in heart and mighty in strength : who hath hardened himself against him and prospered ? which removeth the mountains and they

know it not ; which overturneth them in his anger ; which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble ; which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not, and sealeth up the stars ? Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him ? Who will say unto him, What dost thou ? If God will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him," Job ix, 5, &c. And art thou a fit match for such an antagonist ? " O consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you," Psalm l, 22. Submit to mercy, let not dust and stubble stand out against the Almighty : set not briars and thorns against him in battle, lest he go through them and consume them together ; but lay hold of his strength, that you may " make peace with him," Isa. xxvii, 4, 5. " Wo unto him that striveth with his Maker," Isa. xlvi, 9.

Fourthly, " The wisdom of God is set to ruin thee." He hath ordained his arrows, and prepared instruments of death, and made all things ready, Psalm vii, 12, 13. His counsels are against thee to contrive thy destruction, Jer. xviii, 11. He laughs to see how thou wilt be taken and ensnared in the evil day, Psa. xxxvii, 13, " The Lord shall laugh at him, for he seeth that his day is coming." He sees how thou wilt come down mightily in a moment ; how thou wilt wring thy hands, tear thy hair, eat thy flesh and gnash thy teeth for anguish and astonishment of heart, when thou seest thou art fallen remedilessly into the pit of destruction.

Fifthly, "The truth of God is sworn against thee," Psalm xcv, 11. If he be true and faithful thou must perish if thou goest on, Luke xiii, 3. Unless he be false to his word thou must die, except thou repent, Ezek. xxxiii, 11. "It we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself," 2 Tim. ii, 13; that is, he is faithful to his threatenings as well as his promises, and will show his faithfulness in our confusion, if we believe not. God hath told thee, as plain as it can be spoken, that "if he wash thee not, thou hast no part in him," John xiii, 8; that "if thou livest after the flesh thou shalt die," Rom. viii, 13; that "except thou be converted, thou shalt in nowise enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xviii, 3; and he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself. Beloved, as the immutable faithfulness of God in his promise and oath affords believers strong consolation, Heb. vi, 18, so it is to unbelievers for strong consternation and confusion. O sinner, tell me what shift dost thou make to think of all the threatenings of God's word, that stand upon record against thee? Dost thou believe they are truth, or not? If not, thou art a wretched infidel, and not a Christian; and therefore, give over the name and hope of a Christian. But if thou dost believe them, O heart of steel that thou hast, that canst walk up and down in quiet, when the truth and faithfulness of God are engaged to destroy thee! So that if the Almighty can do it, thou shalt surely perish and be damned. Why, man! the whole book of God

doth testify against thee while thou remainest unsanctified : it condemns thee in every leaf, and is to thee like Ezekiel's roll, "written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and wo," Ezek. ii, 10 ; and all this shall surely come upon thee, and overtake thee, Deut. xxviii, 15, except thou repent ; "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or tittle of this word shall never pass away," Matt. v, 18.

Now put all this together, and tell me if the case of the unconverted be not deplorably miserable ; as we read of some persons that had bound themselves in an oath and in a curse to kill Paul, so thou must know, O impenitent sinner, to thy terror, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound in an oath to destroy thee, Heb. iii, 18. O man ! what wilt thou do ? Whither wilt thou flee ? If God's omniscience can find thee, thou shalt not escape ; if the true and faithful God will save his oath, perish thou must, except thou repent and believe. If the Almighty hath power to torment thee, thou shalt be perfectly miserable in soul and body to all eternity, unless it be prevented by speedy conversion.

II. "The whole creation of God is against thee." "The whole creation," saith Paul, "groaneth and travaileth in pain," Rom. viii, 22. But what is it the creation groaneth under ? Why, the fearful abuse that it is subject to, in serving the lust of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groaneth for ? Why, for freedom and liberty from this abuse ; for the

"creature is very unwillingly subject to this bondage," Rom. viii, 19, 21. If the unreasonable and animate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it as a bondage unsufferable to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures and the ends that the great Creator made them for. While the Lord of hosts is against thee, be sure the host of the Lord is against thee, and all the creatures as it were up in arms, till upon a man's conversion the controversy being taken up between God and him, he makes a covenant of peace with the creatures for him, Job xxi, 21, 24 ; Hos. ii, 18, 20.

III. "The roaring lion hath his full power upon thee," 1 Pet. v, 8. Thou art fast in the paw of that lion that is greedy to devour ; in the snare of the devil, led captive by him at his will, 2 Tim. ii, 26. This is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, Eph. ii, 2 ; his drudges they are, and his lust they do. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world, Eph. vi, 12, that is, of ignorant sinners that live in darkness. You pity the poor Indians that worship the devil for their god, but little think it is your own case. Why, it is the common misery of all the impenitent, that the devil is their god, 2 Cor. iv, 4. Not that they do intend to do him homage and worship ; they will be ready to defy him, and him that should say so by them ; but all this while they serve him, and come and go at his beck, and live under his government : "His servants ye are to

whom you yield yourselves to obey," Rom. vi, 16. Doubtless the liar intends not a service to Satan, but his own advantage; yet it is he that standeth in the corner unobserved, and putteth the things in his heart, Acts v, 3; John viii, 44. Questionless Judas, when he sold his Master for money, and the Chaldeans and Sabbeans, when they plundered Job, intended not to do the devil a pleasure, but to satisfy their own covetous thirst; yet it was he that actuated them in their wickedness, John xiii, 27; Job i, 12, 15, 17. Men may be very slaves and common drudges for the devil, and never know it; nay, they may please themselves in the thoughts of happy liberty, 2 Pet. ii, 19.

Art thou yet in ignorance, and not turned from darkness to light? Why, thou art under the power of Satan, Acts xvi, 18. Dost thou live in the ordinary and wilful practice of any known sin? know that thou art of the devil, 1 John iii, 8. Dost thou live in strife, or envy, or malice? verily he is thy father, John viii, 40, 41. O dreadful case! However Satan may provide his slaves with divers pleasures, Tit. iii, 3, yet it is but to draw them into endless perdition. The serpent comes with the apple in his mouth, O! but (with Eve) thou seest not the deadly sting in his tail. He that is now thy tempter will one day be thy tormentor. O! that I could but give thee to see how black a master thou servest, how filthy a drudgery thou dost, how merciless a tyrant thou gratiest, all whose pleasure is to set thee on work to make thy perdition and dam-

nation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter, in which thou must burn for millions and millions of ages.

IV. "The guilt of all thy sins lies like a mountain upon thee." Poor soul ! thou feelest it not, but this is that which seals thy misery upon thee. While unconverted, none of thy sins can be blotted out, Acts iii, 19 ; they are all upon the score against thee. Regeneration and remission are never separated ; the unsanctified are unquestionably unjustified and unpardoned, 1 Cor. vi, 11 ; 1 Pet. i, 2 ; Heb. ix, 14. Beloved, it is a fearful thing to be in debt, but above all in God's debt ; for there is no arrest so formidable as his, no prison so horrible as his. Look upon an enlightened sinner, who feels the weight of his own guilt, O how frightful are his looks, how fearful are his complaints ! His comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and his sleep is departed from his eyes.

How light soever you may make of it now, you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden ; it is a millstone ; "whosoever falleth upon it shall be broken ; but upon whomsoever it shall fall, it shall grind him to powder," Matt. xxi, 44. What work did it make with our blessed Saviour ! It pressed the very blood out of his veins, and broke all his bones ; and if it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry ?

O think of thy case in time ! canst thou think of that threat without trembling, Ye shall die in

your sins ? John viii, 24. O better were it for thee to die in a jail, in a ditch, in a dungeon, than to die in thy sins. If death, as it will take away all other comforts, would take away thy sins too, it were some mitigation ; but thy sins will follow thee when thy friends leave thee, and all worldly enjoyments shake hands with thee ; thy sins will not die with thee, 2 Cor. v, 10 ; Rev. xx, 12, as a prisoner's other debts will, but they will go to judgment with thee, there to be thy accusers ; and they will go to hell with thee, there to be thy tormentors. Better to have so many fiends and furies about thee than thy sins to fall upon thee and fasten upon thee. O the work that these will make thee ! O look over thy debts in time, how much thou art in the books of every one of God's laws : how is every one of God's commandments ready to arrest thee, and seize thee by the throat, for the innumerable bonds it hath upon thee ? What wilt thou do then, when they shall all together come in against thee ? Hold open the eyes of conscience to consider this, that thou mayest despair of thyself, and be driven to Christ, and " fly for refuge, to lay hold of the hope that is set before thee," Heb. vi, 18.

V. " Thy raging lusts do miserably enslave thee." While impenitent, thou art a very servant of sin ; it reigns over thee, and holds thee under its dominion till thou art brought within the bonds of God's covenant, John viii, 34, 36 ; Titus iii, 3 ; Romans vi, 12, 14, 16, 17. Now there is not such another tyrant as sin :

O the filthy and fearful work that it doth engage its servants in ! Would it not pierce a man's heart, to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling, only to heap up fagots to burn themselves ? Why, this is the constant employment of all sin's drudges : even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they sing and swill in pleasures, they are but treasuring up wrath and vengeance for their eternal burning ; they are but laying in powder and bullet, and adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the fiercer. Who would serve such a master, whose work is drudgery, and whose wages is death ! Romans vi, 23.

What a woful spectacle was the poor wretch who was possessed with the legion ! Would it not have grieved thy heart to have seen him among the tombs cutting and wounding himself ? Mark v, 5. This is thy case, such is thy work, every stroke is a thrust at thy heart, 1 Tim. vi, 10. Conscience, indeed, is now asleep, but when death and judgment shall bring thee to thy senses, then thou wilt feel the raging smart and anguish of every wound.

VI. "The furnace of eternal vengeance is heated ready for thee," Isaiah xxx, 33. "Hell and destruction open their mouths upon thee, they gape and groan for thee," chapter v, 18, waiting, as it were, with a greedy eye, as thou standest on the brink, when thou wi'l drop in. If the wrath of man be "as the roaring of a lion," Prov. xx, 2 ; "More heavy than the

sand," chap. xxvii, 3 ; what is the wrath of the infinite God ! If the burning furnace, heated in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery rage, when he commanded it to be made seven times hotter, was so fierce as to burn up even those that drew near it to throw the three children in, Daniel ii, 19, 22, how hot is that burning oven of the Almighty's fury ? Mal. iv, 1 ; surely this is seventy times more fierce. "Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the day that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord of hosts ?" Ezek. xxii, 14. Canst thou abide everlasting burning ? Canst thou dwell with consuming fire ? Isa. xxxii, 14.

O sinner, stop here and consider ; if thou art a man, and not a senseless block, consider ; bethink thyself where thou standest ; why, upon the very brink of this furnace. "As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between thee and it," 1 Sam. xx, 3. Thou knowest not when thou liest down, but thou mayest be in it before the morning : thou knowest not when thou risest, but thou mayest drop in before night. Darest thou make light of this ? Wilt thou go on in such a dreadful condition as if nothing ailed thee ? If thou puttest it off, and sayest, "This doth not belong to me ;" look again over the foregoing chapter, and tell me the truth ; are none of these black marks found upon thee ? Do not blind thine eyes, do not deceive thyself ; see thy misery while thou mayest prevent it. Think what it is to be a vile outcast, a damned reprobate, a vessel of wrath,

into which the Lord will pour out his tormenting fury, while he hath a being, Rom. ix, 22.

VII. "The law discharges all its threats and curses at thee," Gal. iii, 10; Deut. xxviii. O how dreadful doth it thunder! It spits fire and brimstone in thy face: its words are as drawn swords, and as the sharp arrows of the mighty; it demands satisfaction to the utmost, and cries *justice, justice*; it speaks blood, and war, and wounds, and death against thee. O the execrations, and plagues, and deaths, that this murdering piece is loaded with! (Read Deut. xxviii, 15, &c;) and thou art the mark at which this shot is levelled. "O man, away to thy strong hold," Zech. ix, 12; away from thy sins; haste to the sanctuary, the city of refuge, Heb. xiii, 13, even the Lord Jesus Christ; hide thee in him, or else thou art lost without any hope of recovery.

VIII. "The Gospel itself bindeth the sentence of eternal damnation upon thee," Mark xvi, 16. If thou continuest in thine impenitent and unconverted state, know that the Gospel denounceth a much sorcer condemnation than ever would have been for the transgression only of the first covenant. Is it not a dreadful case to have the Gospel itself thunder out threats of damnation? To have "The Lord roar from Mount Sion" against thee? Joel iii, 16. "Hear the terror of the Lord: He that believeth not shall be damned. Except ye repent ye shall all perish," Luke xiii, 2. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men

love darkness rather than light," John iii, 19. "He that believeth not, the wrath of God abideth on him," John iii, 36. "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" Heb. ii, 2, 3. "He that despised Moses's law, died without mercy : of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trampled under foot the Son of God?" Heb. x, 28, 29.

APPLICATION. And is this true indeed? Is this thy misery? Yea, it is as true as God is. Better open thine eyes, and see it now, while thou mayest remedy it, than blind and harden thyself, till, to thy eternal sorrow, thou shalt feel what thou wouldest not believe; and if it be true, what dost thou mean, to loiter and linger in such a case as this?

Hear what the Lord saith: "Fear ye not me, saith the Lord; will ye not tremble at my presence?" Jer. v, 22. O sinners, do you make light of the wrath to come? Matt. iii, 7. I am sure there is a time coming when you will not make light of it. Why, the very devils do believe and tremble, James ii, 19. What! are you more hardened than they? Will you run upon the edge of the rock? Will you play at the hole of the asp? Will you put your hand upon the cockatrice's den? Will you dance upon the fire till you are burnt? or dally with devouring wrath as if you were indifferent whether you did escape or endure it? O mad-

ness of folly ! Solomon's madman that casteth firebrands, arrows, and death, and saith, " Am I not in jest ?" Prov. xxvi, 18. There is nothing so distracted as the wilful sinner, Luke xv, 16, that goeth on in his unconverted state, without sense, as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs on the cannon's mouth, and sports with his blood, and lets out his life in a frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, to him that goeth on still in his trespasses, Psalm lxviii, 21; for " he stretches out his hand against God, and strengthens himself against the Almighty : he runneth upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler," Job xv, 25, 26. Is it wisdom to dally with the second death, or to venture into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, Rev. xxi, 8, as if thou wert but going to wash thee, or swim for thy recreation ? What shall I say ? I can find out no expression, no comparison, whereby to set forth the dreadful distraction of that soul that continues to go on in sin.

Awake, awake, Eph. v, 14, O sinner ! arise and take thy flight : there is but one door thou mayest flee by, and that is the straight door of conversion and the new birth. Unless thou turn unfeignedly from all thy sins, and come to Jesus Christ, and take him for " the Lord thy righteousness," and walk in him in holiness and newness of life ; as the Lord liveth, it is not more certain that thou art out of hell, than that thou shalt without fail be in it, but a few days and nights from hence. O set thy heart to think

of thy case. Is not thine everlasting misery and welfare that which doth deserve a little consideration ? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the Lord hath not spoken by me, regard me not ; but if it be the very word of God, that all his misery lies upon thee, what a case art thou in ! Is it for one that has his senses to live in such a condition, and not to make all possible expedition for preventing his utter ruin ! O man ! who hath bewitched thee ! Gal. iii, 1, that in the present life thou shouldest be wise enough to forecast thy business, foresee thy danger, and prevent thy mischief ; but in matters of everlasting consequence shouldest be slight and careless as if they little concerned thee ? Why, is it nothing to thee to have all the attributes of God engaged against thee ? Canst thou do well without his favour ? Canst thou escape his hands, or endure his vengeance ? Dost thou hear the creation groaning under thee, and hell groaning for thee, and yet think thy case good enough ? Art thou in the paw of the lion, under the power of corruption, in the dark noisome prison, fettered with lusts, working out thy own damnation, and is not this worth the considering ? Wilt thou make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunderbolts, as if they were but the report of children's popguns, or thou wert to war with their paper pellets ? Dost thou laugh at hell and destruction, or canst thou drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury, as if it were but a common potion ?

"Gird up now thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and answer thou me," Job xl, 7. Art thou such a leviathan, as that the scale of thy pride should keep thee from thy Maker's coming to thee? Wilt thou esteem his arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood? Art thou the chief of all the children of pride, even that thou shouldest count his darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of his spear? Art thou made without fear, and contemnest his barbed irons? Job xli. Art thou like the horse that paweth in the valley, and rejoiceth in his strength, who goeth out to meet the armed men? Dost thou mock at fear, and art not affrighted, neither turnest back from God's sword, when his quiver rattleth against thee, the glittering spear and the shield? Job xxxix, 21, 23. Well, if the threats and calls of the word will not frighten thee nor awaken thee, I am sure death and judgment will. O! what wilt thou do when the Lord cometh forth against thee, and in his fury falleth upon thee, and thou shalt feel what thou readest! If, when Daniel's enemies were cast into the den of lions, both them, and their wives, and their children, the lions had the mastery of them, and brake all their bones in pieces, or ever they came at the bottom of the den, Dan. vi, 24, what shall be done with thee when thou fallest into the hands of the living God, when he shall gripe thee in his iron arms, and grind and crush thee in a thousand pieces in his wrath?

O do not then contend with God! "Repent

and be converted," so none of this shall come upon thee, Isaiah iv, 6, 7. " Seek ye the Lord while he may be found ; call on him while he is near :" " Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon."

CHAPTER VI.

Containing directions for conversion.

And there came one and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life ? Mark x, 17.

BEFORE thou readest these *directions*, I advise thee, yea, I charge thee before God and his holy angels, that thou resolve to follow them (as far as conscience shall be convinced of their agreeableness to God's word and thy state) and call in his assistance and blessing, that they may succeed : and as I have sought the Lord, and consulted his oracles what advice to give thee, so must thou entertain it with that awe, reverence, and purpose of obedience, that the word of the living God doth require.

Now then attend : " Set thine heart unto all that I shall testify unto thee this day ; for it is not a vain thing, it is your life," Deut. xxxii, 46. This is the end of all that has been spoken hitherto, to bring you to set upon turning, and making use of God's means for your conversion. I would not trouble you, nor " torment

you before your time," with the forethoughts of your eternal misery ; but in order to your making your escape. Were you shut up under your present misery without remedy, it were but mercy (as one speaks) to let you alone, that you might take in that little poor comfort that you are capable of in this world ; but you may yet be happy if you do not wilfully refuse the means of your recovery : Behold, I hold open the door to you ; arise, take your flight : I set the way of life before you, walk in it, and you shall live and not die, Deut. xxx, 19 ; Jer. vi, 16. It grieves me to think you should be your own murderers, and throw yourselves headlong, when God and man cry out to you, as Peter in another case to his Master, " Spare thyself."

Hear then, O sinner ! and as ever thou wouldest be converted and saved, embrace the following counsel :—

Direction I. " Set it down with thyself as an undoubted truth, that it is impossible for thee ever to get to heaven in this thy unconverted state." Can any other but Christ save thee ? and he tells thee he never will do it, except thou be regenerated and converted, Matt. xviii, 3 ; John iii, 3. Doth he not keep the keys of heaven ? and canst thou get in without his leave ? as thou must, if ever thou come thither in thy natural condition, without a sound and thorough renovation.

Direct. II. " Labour to get a thorough sight and lively sense and feeling of thy sins." Till

men are weary and heavy laden, and pricked at the heart, and quite sick of sin, they will not come unto Christ, in his way, for ease and cure ; nor to purpose inquire, "What shall we do ?" Matt. ix, 12, and xi, 28 ; Acts ii, 37.—They must set themselves down for dead men before they will come unto Christ that they may have life, John v, 40. Labour therefore to set all thy sins in order before thee ; never be afraid to look upon them, but let thy spirit make diligent search, Psalm lxxviii, 5. Inquire into thine heart and into thy life ; enter into a thorough examination of thyself, and all thy ways, Psalm cxix, 59, that thou mayest make a full discovery ; and call in the help of God's Spirit, and a sense of thine own inability hereunto, for it is his proper work to convince of sin, John xvii, 8 ; spread all before the face of thy conscience, till thy heart and eyes be set abroach : leave not striving with God and thy own soul, till it cry out under the sense of thy sins, as the enlightened jailer, "What must I do to be saved ?" Acts xvi, 30. To this purpose,

" Meditate on the numerousness of thy sins." David's heart failed when he thought of this, and considered that he had more sins than hairs, Psalm lx, 12. This made him cry out upon the multitude of God's tender mercies, Psalm li, 1. The loathsome carcass doth not more hatefully swarm with crawling worms, than an unsanctified soul with filthy lusts ; they fill the head, the heart, the eyes, the mouth of him.—Look backward : where was ever the place,

what was ever the time in which thou didst not sin ? Look inward : what part or power canst thou find in soul or body, but it is poisoned with sin ? What duty dost thou ever perform, into which poison is not shed ? O, how great is the sum of thy debts, who hast been all thy life running behindhand, and never didst nor canst pay off one penny ! Look over the sins of thy nature, and all its cursed brood, the sins of thy life : call to mind thy omissions, commissions, the sins of thy thoughts, words, and actions, the sins of thy youth, and those of thy riper years ; be not like a desperate bankrupt, that is afraid to look over his books ; read the records of conscience carefully. These books must be opened sooner or later, Rev. xx, 12.

“ Meditate on the aggravations of thy sins as they are grand enemies of the God of thy life, and the life of thy soul ; in a word, they are the public enemies of all mankind.” How do David, Ezra, Daniel, and the good Levites, aggravate their sins, from the consideration of their injuriousness to God, their opposition to his good and righteous laws, the mercies, the warnings they were committed against ? Neh. ix ; Dan. ix ; Ezra ix. O the work that sin hath made in the world ! This is the enemy that hath brought in death, and hath robbed and enslaved man, that hath backed the devil, that hath digged hell, Rom. v, 12 ; 2 Pet. ii, 4 ; John viii, 34. This is the enemy that turned the world upside down, and soweth dissension between man and the creatures, between man and

man, yea, between man and himself, setting the sensitive part against the rational, the will against the judgment, lust against conscience ; yea, worst of all, between God and man, making the lapsed sinner both hateful to God, and the hater of him, Zech. xi, 8. O man ! how canst thou make so light of sin ? This is the traitor that sucked the blood of the Son of God ; that sold him, that mocked him, that scourged him, that spit in his face, that nailed his hands, that pierced his side, that pressed his soul, that mangled his body, that never left till he had bound him, condemned him, nailed him, crucified him, and put him to an open shame, Isaiah liii, 4, 6. This is that deadly poison, so powerful of operation, as that one drop of it shed on the root of mankind, hath corrupted, spoiled, poisoned, and undone his whole race at once, Romans v, 18, 19. This is the common butcher, the bloody executioner, that hath killed the prophets, burnt the martyrs, murdered all the apostles, all the patriarchs, all the kings and potentates ; that hath destroyed cities, swallowed empires, butchered and devoured whole nations. Whatever was the weapon it was done by, sin was it that did the execution, Romans vi, 23. Dost thou yet think it but a small thing ? If Adam and all his children could be dug out of their graves, and their bodies piled up to heaven, and an inquest were made, What matchless murderer was guilty of all this blood ? it would be all found in the skirts of sin. Study the nature of sin till thy heart inclines to fear

and loathe it ; and meditate on the aggravations of thy particular sins, how thou hast sinned against all God's warnings, against thy own prayers, against mercies, against correction, against the clearest light, against the freest love, against thine own resolutions, against promises, vows, covenants of better obedience, &c. Charge thy heart home with these things, till it blush for shame, and be brought out of all good opinion of itself, Ezra ix, 6.

“ Meditate on the desert of sin.” It crieth up to heaven ; it calls for vengeance, Gen. xviii, 21. Its due wages is death and damnation ; it pulls the curse of God upon the soul and body, Gal. iii, 10 ; Deut. xxviii. The least sinful word or thought lays thee under the infinite wrath of God almighty, Romans ii, 8, 9 ; Matt. xii, 36. O what a load of wrath, what a weight of curses, what a treasure of vengeance, have all the millions of thy sins then deserved ! Romans ii, 5 ; James v, 3. O judge thyself, that the Lord may not judge thee, 1 Cor. xi, 31.

“ Meditate upon the deformity and defilement of sin.” It is as black as hell, the very image and likeness of the devil, drawn upon the soul, 1 John iii, 8, 10. It would more affright thee to see thyself in the hateful deformity of thy nature, than to see the devil. There is no mire so unclean, no vomit so loathsome, no carcass carrion so offensive, no plague or leprosy so noisome as sin, in which thou art rolled and covered with its odious filth, whereby thou art rendered more displeasing to the pure and holy

nature of the glorious God, than the most filthy objects, composed of whatever is hateful to all thy senses, can be to thee, Job xv, 15, 16. Couldest thou take up a toad into thy bosom ? Couldest thou cherish it and take delight in it ? Why thou art as contrary to the pure and perfect holiness of the Divine nature, and as loathsome as it is to thee, Matt. xxiii, 33, till thou art purified by the blood of Jesus, and the power of renewing grace.

“ Above all other sins, fix the eye of thy consideration on these two.” 1. “ The sin of thy nature.” It is to little purpose to lop the branches, while the root of original corruption remains untouched. In vain do men lave out the streams, when the fountain is running that fills up all again. Let the acts of thy repentance (with David’s) go to the root of the sin, Psalm li, 5. The heart is never soundly broken till thoroughly convinced of the heinousness of original sin. Here fix thy thoughts, this is that that makes thee backward to all good, prone to all evil, Rom. vii, 15, that sheds blindness, pride, prejudice, unbelief, into thy mind ; enmity, inconstancy, obstinacy, into thy will ; inordinate heats and colds into thy affections ; insensibleness, benumbedness, unfaithfulness, into thy conscience ; slipperiness into thy memory ; and, in a word, hath put every wheel of thy soul out of order, and made it (a habitation of holiness) to become a very hell of iniquity, James ii, 6. This is what hath defiled, corrupted, perverted all thy members, and turned

them into weapons of unrighteousness, and servants of sin, Romans vi, 19 ; that had filled the head with carnal and corrupt designs, Mic. ii, 1 ; the hand with sinful practices, Isaiah i, 6 ; the eyes with wandering and wantonness, 2 Peter ii, 14 ; the tongue with deadly poison, James iii, 8 ; that opened the ears to tales, flattery, and evil communication, and shut them against the instructions of life, Zech. vii, 11, 12 ; and hath rendered thy heart a very mint and forge for sin, and the cursed womb of all deadly conceptions, Matt. xv, 19, so that it poureth forth its wickedness without ceasing, 2 Peter ii, 14, even as naturally, freely, and unweariedly, as a fountain doth pour out its waters, Jer. vi, 7, or the raging sea doth cast forth mire and dirt, Isa. lvii, 20. And wilt thou yet be in love with thyself, and tell us any longer of thy good heart ? O never leave meditating on the desperate contagion of original corruption, till with Ephraim thou bemoan thyself, Jer. xxxi, 18 ; and with the deepest shame and sorrow smite on thy breast, as the publican, Luke xviii, 18 ; and with Job abhor thyself, and repent in dust and ashes, Job xlvi, 6.

2. "The particular evil that thou art now addicted to." Find out all its aggravation, set home upon thy heart all God's threats against it : repentance drives before it the whole herd, but especially sticks the arrow in the beloved sin, and singles this out above the rest, to run it down, Psalm xviii, 22. O labour to make this sin odious to thy soul, and double thy

guard and resolutions against it, because this hath, and doth most dishonour God, and endanger thee.

Direct. III. "Strive to affect thy heart with a due sense of thy present misery." Read over the foregoing chapter again and again, and get it out of the book into thy heart. O study thy misery till thy heart cries out for Christ as earnestly as ever a drowning man did for a boat, or the wounded for a surgeon. Men must come to see the danger, and feel the smart of their deadly sores and sickness, or else Christ will be to them a physician of no value, Matt. ix, 12. Then the man slayer hastens to the city of refuge, when pursued by the avenger of blood. Men must be even forced and fired out of themselves, or else they will not come to Christ. It was distress and extremity that made the prodigal think of returning, Luke xv, 16, 17. While Laodicea thinks herself rich, increased in goods, in need of nothing, there is little hope : she must be deeply convinced of her wretchedness, blindness, poverty, and nakedness, before she will come to Christ for his gold, raiment, and eye salve, Rev. iii, 17, 18 ; therefore hold the eyes of conscience open, amplify thy misery as much as possible, do not flee the sight of it for fear it should fill thee with terror. The sense of thy misery is but as it were the suppuration of the wound, which is necessary to the cure. Better fear the torments that abide thee now, than feel them hereafter.

Direct. IV. "Settle it upon thy heart that

thou art under everlasting inability ever to recover thyself." Never think thy praying, reading, hearing, confessing, amending, will work the cure ; these must be attended to, but thou art undone if thou restest in them, Rom. x, 3. Thou art a lost man if thou hopest to escape drowning on any other plank but Jesus Christ, Acts iv, 12. Thou must unlearn thyself, and renounce thy own wisdom, thy own righteousness, thy own strength, and throw thyself wholly upon Christ, as a man that swims casts himself upon the water, or else thou canst not escape. While men trust in themselves, and establish their own righteousness, and have confidence in the flesh, they will not come savingly to Christ, Luke xviii, 9 ; Phil. iii, 3. Thou must know thy gain to be but loss and dung, thy strength but weakness, thy righteousness rags and rottenness, before there will be an effectual closure between Christ and thee, Phil. iii, 7, 8, 9 ; 2 Cor. iii, 5 ; Isa. lxiv, 6. Can the lifeless carcass shake off its grave clothes and loose the bands of death ? Then mayest thou recover thyself, who art dead in trespasses and sins. Therefore, when thou goest to pray or meditate, or do any of the duties to which thou art here directed, go out of thyself, and call in the help of the Spirit, as despairing to do any thing pleasing to God in thy own strength ; yet neglect not thy duty, but lie at the pool, and wait in the way of the Spirit. While the eunuch was reading, then the Holy Ghost did send Philip to him, Acts viii, 28, 29 ; when the dis-

ciples were praying, chap. iv, 31, when Cornelius and his friends were hearing, chap. x, 44, then the Holy Ghost fell upon them, and filled them all. Strive to give up thyself to Christ ; strive to pray, strive to meditate, strive a hundred and a hundred times, strive to do it as well as thou canst ; and while thou art endeavouring in the way of thy duty, the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee, and help thee to do what of thyself thou art utterly unable to perform, Prov. i, 23.

Direction V. "Forthwith renounce all thy sins." If thou yield thyself to the practice of any sin, thou art undone, Rom. vi, 17. In vain dost thou hope for life by Christ, except thou depart from iniquity, 2 Tim. ii, 19. Forsake thy sins, or else thou canst not find mercy, Prov. xxviii, 23. Thou canst not be married to Christ, except thou be divorced from sin ; give up that traitor, or you can have no peace in heaven ; cast the head of Sheba over the wall ; keep not Delilah in the lap : thou must part with thy sin or with thy soul ; if thou spare even one sin, God will not spare thee.—Never make excuses, thy sins must die, or thou must die for them, Psalm lxviii, 21. If thou allow of one sin, though but a little, a secret one, though thou mayest plead necessity, and have a hundred shifts and excuses for it, the life of thy soul must go for the life of that sin, Ezek. xviii, 21 ; and will it not be dearly bought ?

O sinner ! hear and consider : if thou wilt

part with thy sins, God will give thee his Christ. Is not this a fair exchange ? I testify unto thee this day, that if thou perish it is not because there was not a Saviour provided, nor life tendered, but because thou preferrest (with the Jews) the murderer before the Saviour, sin before Christ, and "lovest darkness rather than light," John iii, 19. Search thy heart therefore with candles, as the Jews did their houses for leaven before the passover ; labour to find out thy sins ; enter into thy closet, and consider, What evil have I lived in ? What duty have I neglected toward God ? What sin have I lived in against my brother ? And now strike the darts through the heart of thy sin, as Joab did through Absalom's, 2 Sam. xviii, 14. Never stand looking upon thy sin, nor rolling the sweet morsel under thy tongue, Job xx, 12, but spit it out as poison, with fear and detestation. Alas ! what will thy sins do for thee, that thou shouldest stick at parting with them ? They will flatter thee, but they will undo thee, and cut thy throat while they smile upon thee, poison thee while they please thee, and arm the justice and wrath of the infinite God against thee. They will open hell for thee, and pile up fuel to burn thee : behold the gibbet that they have prepared for thee. O serve them like Haman, and execute them as they would have done thee : away with them, crucify them, and let Christ only be Lord over thee.

Direct. VI. "Make a solemn choice of God for thy portion and blessedness," Deut. xxxi,

17. With all possible devotion and veneration, avouch the Lord for thy God ; set the world, with all its glory and paint and gallantry, with all its pleasures and promotions, on the one hand ; and set God, with all his excellencies and perfections on the other, and see that thou do deliberately make thy choice, Josh. xxvi, 15. Take up thy rest in God, John vi, 68 ; sit thee down under his shadow, Cant. ii, 3 ; let his promises and perfections turn the scale against all the world : settle it upon thy heart that the Lord is an all-sufficient portion ; that thou canst not be miserable while thou hast God to live upon : take him for thy shield and exceeding great reward. God alone is more than all the world, content thyself with him : let others carry the preferments and glory of the world, place thou thy happiness in his favour, and in the light of his countenance, Psalm iv, 6, 7.

Poor sinner ! thou art fallen off from God, and hast provoked his power and wrath against thee ; yet know that of his abundant grace he doth offer to be thy God in Christ, 2 Cor. vi, 17, 18. What sayest thou, man ? Wilt thou have the Lord for thy God ? Why, take this counsel and thou shalt have him, come to him by his Christ, John xvi, 6 ; renounce the idols of thy own pleasures, gain, and reputation, 1 Thess. i, 9 ; let these be pulled out of their throne, and set God's interest uppermost in thy heart. Take him as God, to be chief in thy affections, estimations, intentions, for he will not endure to have any set above him, Rom. i, 24 ; Psalm lxxiii, 25.

Direct. VII. "Accept of the Lord Jesus in all his offices, with all his inconveniences, as thine." Upon these terms Christ may be had. Sinner, thou hast undone thyself, and art plunged into a state of most deplorable misery, out of which thou art unable to get ; but Jesus Christ is able and ready to help thee, and freely tenders himself to thee, Heb. vii, 25 ; John iii, 30. Be thy sins ever so many, ever so great, or of ever so long continuance, yet thou shalt be most certainly pardoned and saved, if thou dost not wretchedly neglect the offer that, in the name of God, is here made to thee.—The Lord Jesus calleth thee to look to him and be saved, Isa. xiv, 22 ; to "come unto him, and he will in nowise cast thee out," John vi, 37 ; yea, he is a suitor to thee, and beseeches thee to be reconciled, 2 Cor. v, 20 ; he crieth in the streets, he knocketh at the door, he wooeth thee to accept of him, and live with him, Prov. i, 20 ; Rev. iii, 20. If thou diest, it is because thou wouldest not come to him for life, John v, 40.

Now accept of an offered Christ, and thou art made for ever ; now give up thy consent to him, and the match is made ; all the world cannot hinder it. Do not stand off because of thy unworthiness, man ; I tell thee, nothing in the world can undo thee but thy unwillingness. Speak, man, art thou desirous of the match ? Wilt thou have Christ in all his relations to be thine ; thy King, thy Priest, thy Prophet ? Wilt thou have him with his inconveniences ? Take

not Christ hand over head, but sit down first and count the cost. Wilt thou lay at his feet ? Wilt thou be content to run all hazards with him ? Wilt thou take thy lot with him, fall where it will ? Wilt thou “ deny thyself, and take up thy cross, and follow him ? ” Art thou deliberately, understandingly, freely, fixedly determined to cleave to him in all times and conditions ? If so, my soul for thine thou shalt never perish, but art passed from death unto life, John iii, 16. Here lies the main point of thy salvation, that thou be found in thy covenant closure with Jesus Christ ; and, therefore, if thou lovest thyself, see that thou be faithful to God, and thy soul here.

Direct. VIII. “ Resign up all thy powers and faculties, and thy whole interest, to be his.” “ They gave their own selves unto the Lord,” 2 Cor. viii, 5. “ Present your bodies a living sacrifice,” Romans xii, 1. The Lord seeks not yours, but you : resign therefore thy body with all its members to him, and thy soul with all its powers, that he may be glorified in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his, 1 Cor. vi, 20.

Again : thou must give up thy whole interest to him. If there be any thing that thou keepest back from Christ, it will be thy undoing, Luke xiv, 33. Unless thou wilt forsake all, (in preparation and resolution of thy heart,) thou canst not be his disciple : thou must hate father and mother, yea, and thy own life also, in comparison of him, and as far as it stands in competition with him, Matt. x, 37 ; Luke xiv, 27, &c.

In a word, thou must *give him thyself*, and all that thou hast, without reservation, or else thou canst have no part in him.

Direct. IX. "Make choice of the laws of Christ as the rule of thy words, thoughts, and actions," Psalm cxix, 30. This is the true convert's choice : but here remember these three rules : 1. "You must choose them all ;" there is no getting to heaven by a partial obedience : read Psalm cxix, 6, 128, 160 ; Ezek. xviii, 21. None must think it enough to take up with the cheap and easy part of religion, and let alone the duties that are costly and self-denying, that grate upon the interest of the flesh ; you must take all or none. A sincere convert, though he makes most conscience of the greatest sins, and weightiest duties, yet he makes true conscience of little sins, and of all duties, Psalm cxix, 6, 113 ; Matt. xxiii, 23. 2. "For all times," for prosperity and adversity, whether it rain or shine. A true convert is resolved in his way, he will stand to his choice, he will not set his back to the wind, and be of the religion of the times. "I have stuck to thy testimonies ; I have inclined my heart to thy statutes, always, even unto the end. Thy testimonies have I taken as a heritage for ever ; I will have respect to thy statutes continually," Psalm cxix, 31, 44, 93, 111, 117. This must not be done hand over head, but deliberately and understandingly. The disobedient son said, "I go, sir," but he went not, Matt. xxi, 30. How fairly did they promise. All that the Lord our

God shall speak unto thee, we will do it ! And it is likely they spoke as they meant ; but when it came to the trial, it was found that there was not such a heart in them as to do what they had promised, Deut. v, 27, 29.

Thirdly. "Observe the special duties that thy heart is most against, and the special sins that it is most inclined to ; and see whether it be truly resolved to perform the one and forego the other." What sayest thou to thy bosom sin, thy gainful sin ? What sayest thou to costly, hazardous, and flesh-displeasing duties ? If thou haltest here, and dost not resolve, by the grace of God, to cross the flesh, and go on, thou art unsound, Psalm xviii, 23, and cxix.

Direct. X. "Take heed of delaying thy conversion, and set about a speedy and present turning ;" "I made haste and delayed not," Psalm cxix, 60. Remember and tremble at the sad instance of the foolish virgins, that came not till the door of mercy was shut, Matt. xxv, 11, and of a convinced Felix, who put off Paul to another season, which we do not find ever came, Acts xxiv, 25. O come in while it is called *today*, lest thou shouldest be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, lest the day of grace should be over, and "the things that belong to thy peace should be hid from thine eyes." Now mercy is wooing thee, now Christ is waiting to be gracious to thee, and the Spirit of God is striving with thee : now ministers are calling : now conscience is stirring : now the market is open, and thou mayest buy oil : now Christ is offered for

thy acceptance, O strike in with the offers of grace ; O ! now or never. If thou make light of this offer, God may swear in his wrath thou shalt not taste of his supper, Luke xvi, 24.

Direct. XI. "Attend conscientiously upon the word as the means appointed for thy conversion," James i, 19 ; 1 Cor. iv, 15. Attend, I say, not customarily, but conscientiously ; with this desire, design, hope, and expectation, that thou mayest be converted by it. To every sermon thou shouldest come with this thought : "O I hope that God will now come in ; I hope this day may be the time, this may be the man by whom God will bring me home." When thou art coming to the ordinances, lift up thy heart thus to God : "Lord, let this be the Sabbath, let this be the season, wherein I may receive renewing grace. O let it be said, that to-day such a one was born unto thee!"

Direct. XII. "Strike in with the Spirit when he begins to work upon thy heart." When he works convictions, O do not stifle them, but join in with him, and beg the Lord to carry on conviction to conversion ; "Quench not the Spirit :" do not outstrive him. Do not resist him. Beware of stifling convictions with evil company or worldly business. When thou findest any troubles for sin, and fears about thy eternal state, beg God that he may never leave thee till they have wrought off thy heart thoroughly from sin, and brought it over to Jesus Christ. Say to him, " Strike home, Lord, leave not the work in the midst. If thou seest that I am not wounded

enough, that I am not troubled enough, wound me yet deeper, Lord. O go to the bottom of my corruption, and let out the life blood of my sins.” Thus yield up thyself to the workings of the Spirit, and spread thy sails to his gusts.

Direct. XIII. “ Set upon the constant and diligent use of serious and fervent prayer.”— He that neglects prayer is a profane and unsanctified sinner, Job xv, 4 ; he that is not constant in prayer, is but a hypocrite, Job xxvii, 10. This is one of the first things conversion appears in, that it sets men on praying, Acts ix, 11 ; therefore set to this duty : let never a day pass over thee, wherein thou hast not, morning and evening, set apart some time for set and solemn prayer in secret. Call thy family also together daily and duly, to worship God with thee. Wo be unto thee, if thine be found among the families that call not on God’s name, Jer. x, 25. But cold and lifeless devotions will not reach half way to heaven. Be fervent and importunate ; importunity will carry it, but without violence the kingdom of heaven will not be taken, Matt. xi, 12. Thou must strive to enter, Luke xiii, 24 ; and wrestle with tears and supplications, as Jacob, if thou meanest to carry the blessing, Gen. xxxii, 24, compared with Hosea xii, 4. Thou art undone for ever without grace, and therefore thou must set to it, and resolve to take no denial : that man who is fixed in his resolution, says, “ Well, I must have grace, or, I will never give over till I have grace ; I will never leave seeking, waiting, and striving with

God and my own heart, till he does renew me by the power of his grace." This man is in the likeliest way to win grace.

Direct. XIV. "Forsake thy evil company, Prov. ix, 6 ; and forbear the occasion of sin," Prov. xxiii, 31. Thou wilt never be turned from sin, till thou wilt decline and forego the temptations of sin.

I never expect thy conversion from sin, unless thou art brought to such self-denial as to flee the occasions. If thou wilt be nibbling at the bait, and playing on the brink, and tampering and meddling with the snare, thy soul will surely be taken. Where God doth expose men in his providence unavoidably to temptation, and the occasions are such as we cannot remove, we may expect special assistance in the use of means ; but when we tempt God by running into danger, he will not engage to support us when we are tempted. And of all temptations, one of the most fatal and pernicious is evil company. O what hopeful beginnings have these often stifled ! O the souls, the estates, the families, the towns, that these have ruined ! How many poor sinners that have been enlightened and convinced, and been just ready to give the devil the slip, and have even escaped the snare, and yet wicked company have pulled them back at last, and made them sevenfold more the children of hell ! In a word, I have no hopes of thee, except thou wilt shake off thy evil company. Christ speaketh to thee as to them in another

case, "If thou seek me, then let these go their way," John xviii, 8. Thy life lies upon it; forsake these or else thou canst not live, Prov. ix, 6. Wilt thou be worse than the beast, to run on when thou seest the Lord with a drawn sword in the way? Numb. xxii, 33. Let this sentence be written in capitals upon thy conscience, A COMPANION OF FOOLS SHALL BE DESTROYED, Prov. xiii, 20. The Lord hath spoken it, and who shall reverse it? And wilt thou run upon destruction when God himself doth forewarn thee? If God doth ever change thy heart, it will appear in the change of thy company. O fear and flee the gulf, by which so many thousand souls have been swallowed up in perdition! It will be hard for thee indeed to make thy escape; thy companions will be mocking thee out of thy religion, and will study to fill thee with prejudices against strictness, as ridiculous and comfortless. They will be flattering thee, and alluring thee; but remember the warning of the Holy Ghost: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: If they say, Come with us, cast in thy lot among us; walk thou not in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path, avoid it, pass by it, turn from it, and pass away: for the way of the wicked is darkness, they know not at what they stumble; they lay wait for their own blood, they lurk privily for their own lives, Prov. i, 10, 18, and iv, 14, 19.

Thus have I told thee what thou must do to be saved. Wilt thou not obey the voice of the

Lord ? Wilt thou not arise and set to thy work ? O man ! what answer wilt thou make, what excuse wilt thou have, if thou shouldest perish at last through very wilfulness, when thou hast known the way of life ? I do not fear thy miscarrying, if thine own idleness do not at last undo thee, in neglecting the use of the means that are so plainly here prescribed. Rouse up, O sluggard ! and ply thy work : be doing, and the Lord will be with thee.

CHAPTER VII.

Containing the motives to conversion.

THOUGH what is already said of the *necessity of conversion*, and of the *miseries of the unconverted*, might be sufficient to induce any considering mind to resolve upon a present turning or conversion unto God, yet knowing what a piece of desperate obstinacy and untractableness the heart of man naturally is, I have thought it necessary to add to the means of conversion, and directions for a covenant closure with God and Christ, some motives to persuade you hereunto.

“ Lord, fail me not now at my last attempt : if any soul hath read hitherto, and is yet untouched, now, Lord, fasten on him, and do thy work ; now take him by the heart, overcome him, persuade him, till he say, *Thou hast prevailed, for thou wert stronger than I.* Lord,

didst thou not make me a fisher of men, and I have toiled all this while and caught nothing ! Alas ! that I should have spent my strength for nought. And now am casting my last.—Lord Jesus, stand thou upon the shore, and direct how and where I shall spread my net ; and let me so enclose with arguments the souls I seek for, that they may not be able to get out. Now, Lord, for a multitude of souls ! Now for a full draught ! O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me this once, O God.”

O ! I am even lost and swallowed up in the abundance of those arguments that I might suggest. If there be any point of wisdom in all the world, it is to repent and come in. If there be any thing righteous, any thing reasonable, this is it. If there be any thing in the world that may be called madness and folly, and any thing that may be counted sottish, absurd, brutish, unreasonable, it is this,—*to go on in their unconverted state*. Let me beg of thee, as thou wouldest not wilfully destroy thyself, to sit down and weigh, beside what has been said, these following motives, and let conscience speak, if it be not reasonable thou shouldest repent and turn.

1. “ The God that made thee does most graciously invite thee.”

First. His most sweet and merciful nature doth invite thee. O the kindness of God, his yearning bowels, his tender mercies ! They are infinitely above our thoughts, higher than

heaven, what can we do ? Deeper than hell, what can we know ? Job xi, 7, 8, 9. " He is full of compassion, and gracious ; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy," Psa. lxxxvi, 15. This is a great argument to persuade sinners to come in : " Turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." If God would not repent of the evil, it were some discouragement to us, why we should not repent. If there were no hope of mercy, it were no wonder why rebels should stand out ; but never had subjects such a gracious Prince ; such pity, patience, clemency, piety, to deal with, as you have. " Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity ?" Micah vii, 18. O sinners ! see what a God you have to deal with ; if you will but turn, " he will turn again and have compassion on you ;" " He will subdue your iniquities, and cast all your sins into the depth of the sea," verse 19. " Return unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will return unto you," Mal. iii, 7 ; Zech. i, 3. Sinners do not fail because they have too high thoughts of God's mercies, but because, 1. They overlook his justice. 2. They promise themselves mercy out of God's way, though his mercy is beyond all imagination, Isaiah lv, 9 ; great mercies, 1 Chron. xxi, 13 ; manifold mercies, Neh. ix, 19 ; tender mercies, Psa. xxv, 6 ; sure mercies, Isa. liv, 8 ; and all are thy own, if thou wilt but turn. Art thou willing to come in ? Why, the Lord hath laid aside his terror,

erected a throne of grace, holds forth the golden sceptre, touch and live. Would a merciful man slay his enemy when prostrate at his feet, acknowledging his wrong, begging pardon, and offering to enter with him into a covenant of peace. Much less will the merciful God.—Study his name, Exod. xxxiv, 7; read their experience, Neh. ix, 17.

Secondly. “His soul-encouraging calls and promises do invite thee.” Ah, what an earnest suitor is mercy to thee! How lovingly, how instantly it calleth after thee! How passionately it wooeth thee! “Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and will not keep anger for ever! only acknowledge thine iniquity. Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you; return, and I will heal your backslidings. Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return unto me, saith the Lord,” Jer. iii, 11, 14, 22. “As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?” Ezek. xxxiii, 11. “If the wicked man turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed shall not be mentioned to him: in his righteousness that he hath done

shall he live. Repent, and turn you from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away all your transgressions, and make you a clean heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die, O house of Israel ? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God ; wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye," Ezek. xviii, 21, 22, 30, 32.

O melting, gracious words ! The voice of a God, and not of a man ! This is not the manner of men, for the offended sovereign to sue to the offending traitorous varlet. O how doth mercy follow thee and plead with thee ! Is not thy heart broken yet ? O that to-day thou wouldst hear his voice !

2. "The doors of heaven are thrown open to thee, the everlasting gates are set wide for thee, and an abundant entrance into the kingdom of heaven administered unto thee." Christ now bespeaks thee as Jezebel did Ahab, "Arise and take possession," 1 Kings xxi, 15. View the glory of the other world as set forth in the map of the Gospel ; get thee up into Pisgah of the promises, and lift up thine eyes northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, and that goodly mountain ; behold the paradise of God, watered with the streams of glory.— Arise, and walk through the land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it, for the land which thou seest, the Lord will give it thee for ever, if thou wilt but return, Genesis xiii, 14, 15, 17. Let me say to thee as Paul to Agrippa, "Be-

liest thou the prophets?" If thou believest indeed, do but view what glorious things are spoken of the city of God," Psalm lxxxvii, 3, and know that all this is here tendered in the name of God to thee: as verily as God is true, it shall be for ever thine, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn and be converted.

Behold the city of pure transparent gold, whose foundations are garnished with all manner of precious stones, whose gates are pearls, whose light is glory, whose temple is God.—Believest thou this? If thou dost, art not thou worse than distracted, that wilt not take possession when the gates are flung open to thee, and thou art bid to enter? O ye sons of folly, will ye embrace the dunghill, and refuse the kingdom? Behold, the Lord takes you up into the mountain, shows you the kingdom of heaven, and all the glory thereof, and tells you, "All this will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me," if you will submit to mercy, accept my Son, and serve me in righteousness and holiness. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe!" Will you court the harlot? Will you seek and serve the world, and neglect eternal glory? What! not enter into paradise, when the flaming sword which was once set to keep you out, is now used to drive you in! But you will say, I am uncharitable to think you infidels and unbelievers. Why, what shall I think of you? Either you are desperate unbelievers, that do not credit it, or stark distracted, that you know and believe the excellency and eter-

nity of this glory, and yet do so fearfully neglect it. Surely you have either no faith, or no reason, and I had almost said, conscience shall tell you so before I leave you.

Do but attend to what is offered you : A blessed kingdom ! a "kingdom of glory," 1 Thess. ii, 12 ; a "kingdom of righteousness," 2 Peter iii, 13 ; a "kingdom of peace," Rom. xiv, 17 ; and an "everlasting kingdom," 2 Pet. i, 11 : here thou shalt dwell, here thou shalt reign for ever, and the Lord shall seat thee on a throne of glory, Matt. xix, 28, and with his own hand shall set the royal diadem upon thy head, and give thee a crown, not of thorns, for there shall be no sinning nor suffering there, Rev. xxi, 27, and xxii, 3, 5 ; not of gold, (for that shall be viler than the dirt in that day,) but a "crown of life," James, i, 12 ; a "crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. iv, 8 ; a "crown of glory," 1 Pet. v. 4 ; yea, "thou shalt put on glory as a robe," 1 Cor. xv, 43, and shalt "shine as the sun in the firmament, in the glory of thy Father." Matt. xiii, 43. Look now upon thy dirty flesh, thy clay, thy worms' meat : this very flesh, this lump, this carcass, shall be brighter than the stars, Daniel xii, 3. In short, thou shalt be made like unto the "angels of God," Luke xx, 36, and "behold his face in righteousness," Psalm xvii, 15. Look in now, and tell me, Dost thou yet believe ? If not, conscience must pronounce thee an infidel ; for it is the very word of God that I speak.

But if thou say thou believest, let me next

know thy resolutions. Wilt thou embrace this for thy happiness? Wilt thou forego thy sinful gains, thy forbidden pleasures? Wilt thou trample on the world's esteem, and spit in the harlot's face, and stop thy ears at her flatteries, and wrest thee out of her embraces? Wilt thou be content to take up with reproach and poverty, if it lie in thy way to heaven, and follow the Lord with humble self-denial in a mortified and flesh-displeasing life? If so, all is thine, and that for ever.

And art thou not fairly offered? Is it not pity but he should be damned that will needs go on and perish, when all this may be had for the taking? Wilt thou take God at his word? Wilt thou let go thy hold fast of the world, and rid thy hands of thy sins, and lay hold on eternal life? If not, let conscience tell thee whether thou art not distracted or bewitched that thou shouldest neglect so happy a choice, by which thou mightest be made blessed for ever.

3. "God will settle unspeakable privileges at present upon thee, 1 Cor. iii, 22; Heb. xii, 22, 24. Though the full of your blessedness shall be deferred till hereafter, yet God will give no little things in hand."

He will redeem you from your thraldom, John viii, 36; he will pluck you from the paw of the lion, Col. i, 13; the serpent shall bruise your heel, and you shall bruise his head, Gen. iii, 15; he shall deliver you from the present evil world, Gal. i, 4; he will redeem you from the power of the grave, Psalm xlix, 15; and

make the king of terrors a messenger of peace to you. He will take out the curse from the cross, Psalm cxix, 71 ; and make affliction the fining pot, the fan, the physic, to blow off the chaff, purify the metal, and purge the mind, Dan. xii, 10 ; Isa. xxvii, 9. He will save you from the arrest of the law, and turn the curse into a blessing to you, Rom. vi, 14 ; Gal. iii, 24. He hath the keys of hell and death, and shutteth that no man openeth, Rev. iii, 7, and i, 18 ; and he will shut his mouth, as once he did the lions', Dan. vi, 22 ; that you shall not be hurt of the second death, Rev. ii, 11.

But he will not only save you from misery, but install you into unspeakable prerogatives. He will bestow himself upon you, he will be a friend unto you, and a Father to you, 2 Cor. vi, 18, he will be a sun and a shield to you, Psalm lxxxiv, 11. In a word, he will be a God to you, Gen. xvii, 7, and what can be said more ? What you may expect that God should do for you, and be to you, that he will, and he will do. She that marries a prince, expects that he should do for her like a prince, that she may live in a suitable state, and have an answerable dowry : he that hath a king for his father, or friend, expects he should do for him like a king ! Alas ! the kings and monarchs of the earth, so much above you, are but like the painted butterflies among the rest of their kind, or the fair coloured palmer worm, among the rest of the worms, if compared with God. As he doth infinitely exceed the glory and power of

his glittering dust, so he will, beyond all proportion, exceed in doing for his favourites whatever princes can do for theirs. He will "give you grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from you," Psalm lxxxiv, 11. He will take you for his sons and daughters, and make you heirs of his promises, Heb. vi, 17; and establish his everlasting covenant with you, Jer. xxxii, 40. He will justify you from all that law, conscience, and Satan, can charge upon you, Rom. viii, 33, 34. He will give you free access into his presence, and accept your person, and receive your prayers, Eph. iii, 12, and i, 6; 1 John v, 11. He will abide in you, and make you the man of his secrets, and hold a constant and friendly communion with you, John xiii, 23, and xv, 15; 1 John i, 3. His ear shall be open, his door open, his store open at all times to you. His blessings shall rest upon you, and he will make your enemies to serve you, and work out "all things for good unto you," Psa. cxv, 13; Rom. viii, 28.

4. "The terms of mercy are brought as low as possible to you." God hath stooped as low to sinners as with honour he can: he will not be thought the author of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness: and whither could he come lower than he hath, unless he should do this? He hath abated the impossible terms of the first covenant, Jer. iii, 23; Mark v, 30; Acts xvi, 31, and iii, 19; Prov. xxviii, 13. He doth not impose any thing unreasonable or impossible as a condition of life upon you: two things

were necessary to be done, according to the tenor of the first covenant : 1. "That you should fully satisfy the demands of justice for past offences. 2. That you should perform personally, perfectly, and perpetually, the whole law for the time to come. Both these are to us impossible, Rom. viii, 3 ; but behold God's gracious abatement in both : he doth not stand upon satisfaction ; he is content to take of the Surety (and he of his own providing too) what he might have exacted from you, 2 Cor. v, 19. He declares himself to have received a ransom, Job xxxiii, 24 ; 1 Tim. ii, 6 ; and that he expects nothing but that you should accept his Son, and "he shall be righteousness and redemption to you," John i, 12 ; 1 Cor. i, 30. And for the future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness, and omit the rigour. He doth not stand upon perfection as a condition of life, though he still insists upon it as his due, but is content to accept of sincerity, Gen. xvii, 1 ; Prov. xi, 20. Though you cannot pay the full debt, he will accept you according to that which you have, and take willingness for doing, and the purpose for the performance, 2 Cor. viii, 12 ; 2 Chron. vi, 8 ; Heb. xi, 17 ; and if you come in his Christ, and set your hearts to please him, and make it the chief of your care, he will approve and reward you, though the vessel be marred in your hands.

O ! consider your Maker's condescension ; let me say to you as Naaman's servant to him, "My father, if the prophet had bid thee do

some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" 2 Kings v, 13. If God had demanded some terrible thing, some severe and rigorous thing of you, to escape eternal damnation, would you not have done it? Suppose it had been to spend all your days in sorrow in some howling wilderness, or pine yourselves with famine, or to "offer the fruit of your bodies for the sin of your souls," would you not have thankfully accepted eternal redemption, though these had been the conditions? If your offended Creator should have held you but one year upon the rack, and then bid you come and forsake your sins, accept Christ and serve him a few years in self-denial, or lie in this case for ever and ever, do you think you should have stuck at the offer, and disputed the terms, and have been unresolved whether you were to accept of the motion? O sinner, return and live; why shouldest thou die, when life is to be had for the taking, when mercy seems beholding to thee (as it were) to be saved? Couldest thou say indeed, "Lord, I knew that thou wast a hard man," Matt. xxv, 24, thou hadst some little excuse; but when the God of heaven has stooped so low, and condescended so far, if now thou shouldest stand off, who shall plead for thee?

Objection. Notwithstanding all these abatements, I am no more able to perform these conditions (in themselves so easy) of *faith, repentance, and sincere obedience*, than to satisfy and fulfil the law.

Answer. These you may perform, by God's grace enabling, whereas the other is naturally impossible in this state, even to believers themselves. But let the next consideration serve for a fuller answer.

5. "Wherein you are impotent, God doth offer grace to enable you." "I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded," Prov. i, 24. What though thou art plunged into the ditch of that misery from which you can never get out? Christ offereth to help you out; he reacheth out his hand to you, and if you perish, it is for refusing his help. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man open unto me, I will come in," Revelation iii, 20. What though you are poor, and wretched, and blind, and naked? Christ offereth a cure for your blindness, a covering for your nakedness, a remedy for your poverty; he tenders you his righteousness, his grace. "I counsel thee to buy of me gold, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed; and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see," Rev. iii, 17, 18. Do you say the condition is impossible, for I have not wherewith to buy! You must know that this buying is "without money and without price," Isa. lv, 1; this buying is by begging and seeking with diligence and constancy in the use of God's means, Prov. ii, 3, 4. God commandeth thee to know him and to fear him. Dost thou say, Yea, but my mind is blind, and my heart is hardened from his fear! I answer, God doth

offer to enlighten thy mind, and to teach thee this fear ; that is presented to thy choice, Prov. i, 29. " For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord. So that now, if men live in ignorance and estrangement from the Lord, it is because they will not understand and desire the knowledge of his ways," Job xxi, 14. " If thou criest after knowledge, if thou seekest her as silver, &c, then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God, Prov. ii, 3-5. Is not here a fair offer ? " Turn ye at my reproof, behold, I will pour out my Spirit unto you," Prov. i, 23. Though of yourselves you can do nothing, yet you may do all through his Spirit enabling you, and he doth offer assistance to you. God bids you " wash, and make you clean," Isa. i, 16. You say you are unable, as much as the leopard to wash out his spots, Jer. xiii, 23. Yea, but the Lord doth offer to purge you, so that if you be filthy still, it is through your own wilfulness, Ezek. xxiv. 13. " I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged," Jer. xiii, 27. " O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean ? When shall it once be ? " God doth wait when you will be made clean ; when you will yield to his motions, accept his offers, and let him do for you and in you, what you cannot do for yourselves. You do not know how much God will do upon your importunity, if you will be but restless and instant with him, Luke xi, 8, and xviii, 5.

Though God hath not bound himself by express promise to wicked men, to give them grace,

yet he hath given them abundance of encouragement to expect it from him, if they seek it earnestly in his way. His most gracious nature is abundant encouragement. If a rich and most bountiful man should see thee in misery, and bid thee come to his door, wouldest thou not with confidence expect at thy coming to find some relief? God appoints thee to use such and such means in order to thy obtaining repentance and faith; doth not this argue, that God will bestow these upon thee if thou dost ply him diligently in prayer, meditation, reading, hearing, self-examination, and the rest of his means? Otherwise God should but mock his poor creatures to put them upon these self-denying endeavours, and then, when they have been hard put to it, and continued waiting upon him for grace, deny them at last. Surely, if a good-natured man would not deal thus, much less will the most merciful and gracious God.

THE CONCLUSION OF THE WHOLE.

AND now, my brethren, let me know your minds; what do you intend to do; will you go on and die? Or, will you set upon a thorough and speedy conversion, and lay hold on eternal life? How long will ye linger in Sodom? "How long will ye halt between two opinions?" 1 Kings xviii, 21. Are you not resolved whether Christ or Barabbas, whether bliss or

torment, whether the land of Cabul, 1 Kings ix, 13, or the paradise of God, be the better choice ; is it a disputable case, whether the Abana and Pharpar of Damascus, be better than all the streams of Eden ; or whether the vile puddle of sin is to be preferred before the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb ? Can the world, in good earnest, do that for you which Christ can ? Will it stand by you to eternity ? Will pleasures, land, titles, or treasures, descend with you ? Psalm xlix, 17 ; 1 Tim. vi, 7. If not, had you not need look after somewhat that will ? What mean you to stand wavering, to be off and on ? Foolish children ! how long will you stick between the womb and the world ? Shall I lead you at last no farther than Agrippa, but almost persuaded ? why, you are for ever lost if left there ; as good not at all, as not altogether Christians. You are half in the mind to give over your former negligent life, and set to a strict and holy course ; you could wish you were as some others are, and could do as they can do. How long will you rest in idle wishes and fruitless purposes ? When will you come to a fixed, firm, and full resolve ? Do not you see how Satan gulls you, by tempting you to delays ? How long hath he drawn you on in the way of perdition ? How many years have you been purposing to mend ? What if God should have taken you off this while ?

Well, put me not off with a dilatory answer : tell me not of hereafter, I must have your im-

mediate consent : if you be not now resolved, while the Lord is treating with you, and courting you, much less are you like to be hereafter, when these impressions are worn out, and you are hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Will you give me your hands ? Will you set open the doors, and give the Lord Jesus the full and ready possession ? Will you put your names into his covenant ? Will you subscribe ? What do you resolve upon ? If you are still upon your delays, my labour is lost, and all is like to come to nothing. Fain I would that you should now put in your adventures. Come, cast in your lot, make your choice. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation : to-day if you will hear his voice." Why should not this be the day from whence thou shouldest be able to date thy happiness ? Why shouldest thou venture a day longer in this dangerous and dreadful condition ? What if God should this night require thy soul ? "O that thou mightest know in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, before they be hid from thine eyes," Luke xix, 42. This is thy day, and it is but a day, John ix, 4. Others have had their day, and have received their doom, and now art thou brought upon the stage of this world, here to act thy part for the whole eternity. Remember thou art now upon thy good behaviour for everlasting ; if thou make not a wise choice now, thou art undone for ever. Look what thy present choice is, such must thine eternal condition be, Luke x, 42, and xvi, 25 ; Prov. i, 27-29.

And is it true indeed ? Is life and death at thy choice ? Yea, it is as true as truth is, Deut. viii, 14. Why then, what hinders, but that thou shouldest be happy ? Nothing doth or can hinder, but thine own wilful neglect or refusal. It was the speech of the eunuch to Philip, “ See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized ? ” So I may say to thee, See, here is Christ, here is mercy, pardon, and life ; what hinders, but that thou shouldest be pardoned and saved ? One of the martyrs, as he was praying at the stake, had his pardon set by him in a box (which indeed he refused deservedly, because upon unworthy terms) ; but here the terms are most honourable and easy. O sinner ! wilt thou burn with thy pardon by thee ? Why, do but forthwith give up thy consent to Christ, to renounce thy sins, deny thyself, take up the yoke and the cross, and thou carriest the day : Christ is thine, pardon, peace, life, and blessedness, all are thine. And is not this an offer worth embracing ? Why shouldest thou hesitate or doubtfully dispute about the case ? Is it not past controversy, whether God be better than sin, and glory than vanity ? Why shouldest thou forsake thy own mercies, and sin against thy own life ? When wilt thou shake off thy sloth, and lay by thine excuses ? “ Boast not thyself of to-morrow, thou knowest not where this night may lodge thee,” Prov. xxvii, 1.

Beloved, now the Holy Spirit is striving with you ; he will not always strive. Hast thou not felt thine heart warmed by the word, and been

almost persuaded to leave off thy sins and come in to God ? Hast thou not felt some good motions in thy mind, wherein thou hast been warned of thy danger, and told what thy careless course would end in ? It may be thou art like young Samuel, who, when the Lord called once and again, knew not the voice of the Lord, 1 Sam. iii, 6, 7. But these motions and items are the offers, and essays, and callings, and strivings of the Spirit : O, take the advantage of the tide, and know the day of thy visitation.

Now the Lord Jesus stretcheth wide his arms to receive you ; he beseecheth you by us. How movingly, how meltingly, how pitifully, how compassionately he calleth ! The Church is put into a sudden ecstasy upon the sound of his voice, “ The voice of my beloved ! ” Cant. ii, 8. O, wilt thou turn a deaf ear to his voice ? It is not the voice that breaketh the cedars, and maketh the mountains to skip like a calf ; that shaketh the wilderness, and divideth the flames of fire ; it is not Sinai’s thunder, but a soft and still voice ; it is not the voice of Mount Ebal, a voice of cursing and terror, but the voice of Mount Gerizim, the voice of blessing, and of glad tidings of good things. It is not the voice of the trumpet, nor the voice of war, but a messenger of peace from the King of peace, Eph. vi, 15 ; 2 Cor. v, 18, 20. Methinks it should be with thee as with the spouse, “ My soul failed me when he spake,” Cant. v, 6. I may say to thee, O sinner, as Martha to her

sister, "The Master is come and calleth for thee," John xi, 28. O now with Mary arise quickly and come unto him. How sweet are his invitations. He crieth in the open concourse, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink," John vii, 37; Prov. i, 21. He broaches his own body for thee. O come and lay thy mouth to his side. How free is he? he excludeth none: "Whosoever will, let him come and take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii, 17. "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither. Come, eat of my bread, drink of the wine that I have mingled. Forsake the foolish and live," Prov. ix, 4, 6. "Come unto me, &c. take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, and ye shall find rest to your souls," Matt. vi, 28, 29. "Him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out," John vi, 37. How doth he bemoan the obstinate refuser! "*O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Matt. xxiii, 37. "Behold me, behold me; I have stretched out my hands all the day to a rebellious people," Is. lxv, 1, 2. O be persuaded now at last to throw yourselves into the arms of love.

Behold, O ye sons of men, the Lord Jesus hath thrown open the prison, and now he cometh to you as the magistrates once to them, Acts xvi, 39, and beseeches you to come out. If it were from a palace or paradise that Christ did call you, it were no wonder if you were unwilling; (and yet how easily was Adam de-

luded thence !) but it is from your prison, sirs ; from your chains, from the dungeon, from darkness, that he calleth you, Isaiah xlii, 6, 7 ; and will you not come ? He calls you into liberty, Galatians v, 13 ; and will you not hearken :— His yoke is easy, his laws are liberty, his service freedom, Matt. xi, 30 ; James i, 25 ; 1 Cor. vii, 22 ; and whatever prejudice you may have against his ways, if a God may be believed, you shall find them all pleasure and peace, and shall taste sweetness and joy unutterable, and take infinite delight and felicity in them, Proverbs iii, 17 ; Psalm cxix, 103, 111, 165 ; 1 Peter i, 8.

Beloved, I am loath to leave you ; I cannot tell how to give you over. I am now ready to shut up, but would fain strike this bargain between Christ and you before I end. What ! shall I leave you as I found you at last ? Have you read hitherto, and are you not yet resolved upon a present abandoning all your sins, and closing with Jesus Christ ? Alas ! what shall I say ? what shall I do ? Will you resist all my importunity ? Have I run in vain ? Have I used so many arguments, and spent so much time to persuade you, and will you at last disappoint me ? But it is a small matter that you reject me ; you put a slight upon the God that made you, you reject the bowels and beseeching of a Saviour, and will be found resisters of the Holy Ghost, Acts vii, 51, if you will not now be prevailed with to repent and be converted.

Well, though I have called you long, and you

have refused, I shall yet this once more lift up my voice like a trumpet, and cry from the highest places of the city, before I conclude with a miserable *conclamatumest*. Once more I shall call after regardless sinners, that, if it be possible, I may awaken them : " O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord," Jer. xxii, 29. Unless you be resolved to die, lend your ears to the last calls of mercy. Behold, in the name of God I make open proclamation to you : " Hearken unto me, O ye children, hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not," Prov. viii, 32, 33.

" Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy and eat : yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David," Isa. lv, 1, 3.

Ho, every one that is of any manner of disease or torment, Matt. iv, 23, 24, or is possessed of an evil spirit, whether of pride, fury, or lust, or covetousness, come ye to the Physician, bring away your sick. Lo, here is he that " healeth all manner of sicknesses, and all manner of diseases among the people."

Ho, every one that is in debt, and every one

that is in distress, and every one that is discontented, gather yourselves unto Christ, and he will become a Captain over you ; he will be your protection from the arrest of the law ; he will save you from the hand of justice. Behold, he is an open sanctuary to you ; he is a known refuge, Heb. vi, 18 ; Psalm xlviii, 3. Away with your sins, and come in upon him, lest the avenger of blood seize you, lest devouring wrath overtake you.

Ho, every ignorant sinner, come and buy eye salve, that thou mayest see, Rev. iii, 18. Away with thy excuses ; thou art for ever lost if thou continuest in this state, 2 Cor. iv, 3 ; but accept of Christ for thy Prophet, and he will be a light unto thee, Isaiah xlii, 6 ; Ephesians v, 14. Cry unto him for knowledge, study his word, take pains about the principles of religion, humble thyself before him, and he will teach thee his way, and make thee wise unto salvation, Matthew xii, 36 ; Luke viii, 9 ; John v, 49. But if thou wilt not follow him in the diligent use of his means, but idly sit down because thou hast but one talent, he will condemn thee for a wicked and slothful servant, Matt. xxv, 24, 26.

Ho, every profane sinner, come in and live ; return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy on thee : O be entreated, return and come, thou that hast defiled thy mouth with oaths and execrations. " All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven thee," Matt. iii, 28, if thou wilt but thoroughly turn unto Christ,

and come in. Though thou wast as unclean as Magdalene, yet “put away thy whoredoms out of thy sight, and thy adulteries from between thy breasts,” and give up thyself unto Christ as a vessel of holiness, fit for his use ; and then, “though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; and though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,” Luke vii, 47 ; Isaiah i, 18.

Hear, O ye drunkards ! “How long will ye be drunken ? Put away your wine,” 1 Samuel i, 14. Though you have rolled in the vomit of your sin, take the vomit of repentance, and thoroughly disgorge your beloved lusts, and the Lord will receive you, 2 Corinthians vi, 17. Give up yourselves to Christ, to live soberly, righteously, and godly. Embrace his righteousness, accept his government, and though you have been swine, he will wash you, Revelation i, 5.

Hear, O ye loose companions, whose delight is in vain and wicked society, to sport away your time in carnal mirth and jollity with them ; come in at Wisdom’s call, and choose her and her ways, and you shall live, Proverbs ix, 5, 6.

Hear, O ye scorners ! hear the word of the Lord ; though you have made a sport at godliness and the professors thereof, though you have made a scorn of Christ and of his ways, yet even to you doth he call, to gather you under the wings of his mercy, Prov. i, 22, 23. In a word, though you should be found among

the worst of the black roll, 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10 ; yet upon your thorough conversion you shall be washed, you shall be justified, you shall be sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God, verse 11.

Ho, every formal professor, that art but a luke-warm Christian, and restest in the form of godliness, give over thy halving and thy halting, be a Christian throughout, be zealous and repent ; and then, though thou hast been an offence to Christ's stomach, thou shalt be the joy of his heart, Rev. iii, 16, 19, 20.

And now bear witness that mercy hath been offered you : I call heaven and earth to record "against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing ; therefore choose life that you may live," Deut. xxx, 19. I can but woo and warn you : I cannot compel you to be happy, if I could I would. What answer will you send me with to my Master ? Let me speak to you, as Abraham's servant to them, " And now if you will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me," Genesis xxiv, 49. O for such a happy answer as Rebekah gave them, verses 57, 58. " And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man ? and she said, I will go." O that I had but this from you ! Why should I be your accuser, Matt. x, 14, 15, who thirst for your salvation ? Why should the passionate pleadings and wooings of mercy be turned into the horrid aggravation of your ob-

stinacy, and additions to your misery ? Judge in yourselves : Do you not think their condemnation will be doubly dreadful, that shall go on in their sins after all endeavours to recall them ? Doubtless, “ It shall be more tolerable for *Tyre* and *Sidon*, yea, for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, in the day of judgment, than for you,” Matthew xi, 22, 24.

Beloved, if you have any pity for your perishing souls, close with the present offers of mercy : if you would not continue and increase the pains of your travailing ministers, do not stick in the birth. If the God that made you have an authority with you, obey his command, and come in. If you are not the despisers of grace, and would not shut up the doors of mercy against yourselves, repent and be converted : let not heaven stand open for you in vain : let not the Lord Jesus open his wares, and bid you buy without money and without price, in vain : let not his ministers and his Spirit strive with you in vain, and leave you now at last unpersuaded, lest the sentence go forth against you, “ The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them,” Jer. vi, 29, 30.

Father of spirits, take the heart in hand that is too hard for my weakness ; do not thou end, though I have done : half a word from thy effectual power will do the work. O thou that hast the key of David, that openest and no man shutteth, open thou this heart as thou didst Lydia’s,

and let the King of glory enter in, and make this soul thy captive ! Let not the tempter harden him in delays ; let him not stir from this place, nor take his eyes from these lines, till he be resolved to forego his sins and accept of life on thy self-denying terms. In thy name, O Lord God, did I go forth to these labours, in thy name do I shut them up. Let not all the time they have cost be lost hours ; let not all the thoughts of heart, and all the pains that have been about them, be but lost labour. Lord, put in thy hand into the heart of this reader, and send thy Spirit, as once thou didst Philip, to join himself to the chariot of the eunuch, while he was reading the word. And though I should never know it while I live, yet I beseech thee, O Lord God, let it be found at that day that some souls are converted by these labours ; and let some be able to stand forth and say, that by these persuasions they were won unto thee. *Amen, Amen.* Let him that readeth say, *Amen.*

MR. ALLEINE'S COUNSEL FOR PERSONAL AND FAMILY GODLINESS.

BELOVED, I despair of ever bringing you to salvation without sanctification, or possessing you of happiness without persuading you to holiness. God knows I have not the least hope ever to see one of your faces in heaven, except you be converted, and sanctified, and exercise yourselves unto godliness. I beseech you, study personal godliness and family godliness.

1. *Personal godliness.* Let it be your first care to set up Christ in your hearts: see that you make all your worldly interests to stoop to him, that you be entirely and unreservedly devoted unto him. If you wilfully, and deliberately, and ordinarily harbour any sin, you are undone, Psalm lxviii, 21; Ezek. xviii, 20. See that you unfeignedly take the law of Christ as the rule of your words, thoughts, and actions, and subject your whole man, members, and minds, faithfully to him, Psalm cxix, 34; Rom. vi, 13. If you have not a true respect to all God's commandments, you are unsound at heart, Psalm cxix, 6. O study to get the image and impress of Christ upon you within. Begin with your hearts, else you build without any foundation. Labour to get a saving change within, or else all external performances will be to no purpose: and then study to show forth

the power of godliness in the life : let piety be your first and great business ; it is the highest point of justice to give God his due. Beware that none of you be a prayerless person ; for that is a most certain discovery that you are a Christless and graceless person ; or one that is a very stranger to the fear of God, Psalm v, 7. Suffer not your Bibles to gather dust ; see that you converse daily with the word, John v, 39. That man can never lay claim to blessedness, whose delight is not in the law of the Lord, Psa. i, 1, 2. Let meditation and self-examination be your daily exercise.

But piety without charity is but the half of Christianity ; or rather impious hypocrisy. We may not divide the table : see therefore that you do justly and love mercy, and let equity and charity run like an even thread throughout all your dealings. Be you temperate in all things, and let chastity and sobriety be your undivided companions. Let truth and purity, seriousness and modesty, heavenliness and gravity, be the constant ornaments of your speech. Let patience and humility, simplicity and sincerity, shine out in all the parts of your conversation. See that you forget and forgive wrongs, and requite them with kindness, as you would be found the children of the Most High. Be merciful in your censures, and put the most favourable construction upon your brethren's carriage, that their actions will reasonably bear. Be slow in promising, punctual in fulfilling. Let meekness and innocence, affability, yieldingness, and

simplicity, commend your conversation to all men. Let none of your relations want that love and loyalty, reverence and duty, that tenderness, care, and vigilance, which their several places and capacities call for. This is thorough godliness. I charge you before the most high God, that none of you be found a swearer, or a liar, or a lover of evil company, or a scoffer, or malicious, or covetous, or a drunkard, or a glutton, unrighteous in his dealings, unclean in his living, or a quarreller, or a thief, or a backbiter, or a railer ; for I denounce unto you from the living God, that destruction and damnation is the end of all such, Prov. xiii, 20 ; James v, 12 ; Rev. xxi, 8 ; 1 Cor. vi, 9, 10 ; Gal. v, 19—21.

2. *Family godliness.* He that hath set up Christ in his heart, will be sure to study to set him up in his house. Let every family with you be a Christian Church, 1 Cor. vi, 19 ; every house a house of prayer : let every householder say with Joshua, "I and my house will serve the Lord," chap. xxiv, 15 ; and resolve with David, "I will walk in my house with a perfect heart," Psalm ci, 2. Let me press upon you a few duties in general.

First. Let religion be in your families, not as a matter by the by (to be minded at leisure, when the world will give you leave) but the standing business of the house : let them have your prayers as duly as their meals. Is there any of your families but have time for their taking food ? wretched man ! canst thou not as well find time to pray in ?

Secondly. Settle it upon your hearts, that your souls are bound up in the souls of your family ; they are committed unto you, and if they be lost through your neglect, they will be required at your hands. Sirs, if you do not, you shall know that the charge of souls is a heavy charge, and that the blood of souls is heavy guilt. O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and dost thou not bestir thyself for them, that their blood be not found in thy skirts ? Wilt thou do no more for immortal souls than thou wilt do for the beasts that perish ? What dost thou do for thy children and servants ? Thou providest meat and drink for them agreeable to their nature ; and dost thou not the same for thy beasts ? Thou givest them medicines, and cherishest them when they are sick ; and dost thou not the same for thy swine ? More particularly,

1. Let the solemn reading of the word of God, and singing of psalms, be your family exercises, John v, 39 ; Psalm cxviii, 15. See Christ singing with his family, namely, his disciples, Matt. xxvi, 30.

2. Let every person in your families be as duly called to an account of their profiting by the word heard or read, as they be about doing your own business : this is a duty of consequence unspeakable, and would be a means to bring those under your charge to remember and profit by what they receive. See Christ's example in calling his family to account, Matt. xvi, 11, 13, 15.

3. Often take an account of the souls under your care, concerning their spiritual states ; (herein you must be followers of Christ, Matt. xiii, 10, 36, 51 ; Mark iv, 10, 11;) make inquiry into their condition. Insist much upon the sinfulness and misery of their natural state, and upon the necessity of regeneration and conversion, in order to their salvation. Admonish them gravely of their sins, encourage their beginnings, follow them earnestly, and let them have no quiet from you, until you see in them a saving change. This is a duty of very great consequence, but I am afraid most fearfully neglected : doth not conscience say,— “Thou art the man?”

4. Look to the strict sanctifying of the Sabbath by all your household, Exod. xx, 10 ; Lev. xxiii, 3. Many poor families have little time else : O improve but your Sabbath days as diligently in labouring for knowledge and doing your Maker’s work, as you do the other days in doing your own work, and I doubt not but you may come to some proficiency.

5. Let the morning and evening sacrifices of solemn prayer be daily offered up in all your families, Psalm xcii, 1, 2 ; Exod. xxx, 7, 8 ; Luke i, 9, 10. Beware ye be not found among the families that call not upon God’s name ; for why should there be wrath from the Lord upon your families ? Jer. x, 25. O miserable families without God in the world, that are without family prayer ! What, have you so many family sins, family wants, family mercies ; what, and

yet no family prayers? How do you pray with all prayer and supplication if you do not with family prayer? Eph. vi, 18. Say not, "I have no time." What! hast thou not all thy time on purpose to serve God and save thy soul? And yet is this it for which thou canst find no time? Find but a heart, and you will find time. Pinch out of your meals and sleep, rather than want for prayer. Say not, "My business will not give me leave." This is the greatest business, to save thyself and the souls committed to thee. Business! a whet will be not let. In a word, the blessing of all is to be got by prayer, Jer. xxix, 11, 12; 2 Sam. vii, 29; and what is thy business without God's blessing? Say not, "I am not able;" use the one talent, and God will increase it, Matt. xxv, 24, &c. But if there is no other remedy, thou must join with thy abler neighbour: God hath special regard to joint prayer, James v, 4, 12; Acts xii, 5, 10, 12; 2 Cor. i, 11; and therefore you must improve family advantages for the performing of it.

6. Put every one in your families upon private prayer. Observe whether they do perform it. Get them the help of a form if they need it, till they are able to pray without it. Direct how to pray, by reminding them of their sins, wants, and mercies, the materials of prayer. This was the practice of John and of Jesus, Luke xi, 1, &c.

7. Set up catechising in your families, at the least once every week. Have you no dread of the Almighty's charge, that you should "teach

these things diligently to your children, and talk of them as they sit in your houses ?” Deut. vi, 6, &c. ; and “ train them up in the way wherein they should go ?” Prov. xxii, 6. Hath God so commended Abraham, that he would “ teach his children and household,” Gen. xviii, 10 ; and that he had many instructed servants, Gen. xiv, 14, (see the margin,) and given such a promise to him thereupon, and will you not put in for a share, neither in the praise nor the promise ? Hath Christ honoured catechising with his presence, Luke vi, 46 ; and will you not own it with your practice ? Say not, “ They are careless and will not learn.” What have you your authority for, if not to use it for God, and the good of their souls ! You will call them up and force them to do your work ; and should you not, at least, be as zealous in putting them upon God’s work ? Say not “ They are dull, and are not capable :” if they be dull, God requires of you the more pains and patience : but so dull as they are, you will make them learn how to work ; and can they not learn how to live ? Are they capable of the mysteries of your trade, and are they not capable of the plain principles of religion ? Well, as ever you would see the growth of religion, the cure of ignorance, the remedy of profaneness, the downfall of error, fulfil you my joy, in going through with this duty

Will you answer the calls of Divine Providence ? Would you remove the incumbent, or prevent the impendent calamities ? Would you plant nurseries for the Church of God ? Would

you that God should build your houses, and bless your substance ? Would you that your children should bless you ? O then set up piety in your families, as ever you would be blessed, or be a blessing : let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living God, in which his worship (according to all the aforementioned directions) may be with constancy, reverently performed, Prov. xxix, 1. " He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy :" O be wise in time, that you be not miserable to eternity !

A CALL
TO
THE UNCONVERTED.

BY RICHARD BAXTER.



A CALL TO THE UNCONVERTED.

" Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked ; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel ?" Ezek. xxxiii, 11.

It has been the wonder of many, to read in the Holy Scripture how few will be saved ; and that the greatest part even of those that are called, will be shut out of heaven, and tormented with the devils in eternal fire. Infidels believe not this, and therefore must feel it. Those that do believe it, are forced to cry out with St. Paul, Rom. xi, 33, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !* But nature itself teaches us all to lay the blame of evil works upon the doers ; and therefore when we see any heinous thing committed, a principle of justice provokes us to inquire for them that did it. If we saw a man killed, and cut in pieces by the way, we should presently ask, " O who did this cruel deed ?" If a town were set on fire, you would ask, " What wicked wretch did this ?" So when we read that the most will be firebrands of hell for ever, we must needs think with ourselves, How comes this to pass ? Who is it that can be so cruel as

to be the cause of such a thing as this ? And we can meet with few that will own the guilt. It is indeed confessed by all, that Satan is the cause ; but that resolves not the doubt, because he is not the principal cause. He does not force men to sin, but tempts them to it, and leaves it to their own will, whether they will do it or not. It lies therefore between God himself and the sinner ; one of them must be the principal cause of this misery ; for there is no other to cast it upon : and God disclaims it : he will not take it upon him. And the wicked disclaim it usually, and they will not take it upon them. And this is the controversy which is here carried on in my text.

The Lord complains of the people : and the people think it is the fault of God. They say, verse 10, *If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how shall we then live?* As if they should say, if we must die, how can we help it ? As if it were not their fault, but God's. But God here in my text clears himself of it, and tells them how they may help it if they will, and persuades them to use the means : and if they will not be persuaded, he lets them know that it is their own fault : and if this will not satisfy them, he will not therefore forbear to punish them. It is he that will be the Judge ; and he will judge them according to their ways ; they are no judges of him or of themselves, as wanting authority and wisdom, and impartiality : nor is the cavilling with God, that shall serve their turn, or save them from the execution of justice.

The words of this verse contain, 1. God's clearing of himself from the blame of their destruction. This he does not by disowning his law, that *the wicked shall die*, nor by disowning his execution according to that law, or giving them any hope that the law shall not be executed ; but by professing that it is not their death that he takes pleasure in, but their returning rather than they may live : and this he confirms to them by his oath. 2. An express exhortation to the wicked to return ; wherein God does not only command, but persuade, and condescend also to reason the case with them. Why will they die ? The direct end of this exhortation is, that they may turn and live. The secondary ends, upon supposition that this is not attained, are these two. First, to convince that it is not the fault of God if they be miserable. Secondly, to convince them from their manifest wilfulness in rejecting all his commands and persuasions that it is *their own* fault, and they die, even because they will die.

The substance of the text lies in these observations following :—

Doct. 1. It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

Doct. 2. It is the promise of God, that the wicked shall live if they will turn.

Doct. 3. God takes pleasure in men's conversion and salvation, but none in their death or damnation ; he had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

Doct. 4. This is the most certain truth, which

because God would not have men to question, he has confirmed to them solemnly by his oath.

Doct. 5. The Lord redoubles his commands and persuasions to the wicked to turn.

Doct. 6. The Lord condescends to reason the case with them, and asks the wicked, why they will die.

Doct. 7. If after all this the wicked will not turn, it is not the fault of God that they perish, but of themselves ; their own wilfulness is the cause of their damnation : they therefore die, because they will die.

Having laid the text open before your eyes in these plain propositions, I shall next speak somewhat of each of them in order, though very briefly.

DOCTRINE I.

It is the unchangeable law of God, that wicked men must turn or die.

If you will believe God, believe this : there is but one of these two ways for every wicked man, either conversion or damnation. I know the wicked will hardly be persuaded either of the truth or equity of this. No wonder if the guilty quarrel with the law. Few men are apt to believe that which they would not have to be true ; and fewer would have that to be true which they apprehend to be against them.— But it is not quarrelling with the law or with

the judge that will save the malefactor. Believing and regarding the law might have prevented his death ; but denying and accusing it will but hasten it. If it were not so, a hundred would bring their *reasons against* the law, for one that would bring his reason to the law : and men would rather choose to give their reasons why they should not be punished, than to hear the commands and reasons of their governors which require them to obey. The law was not made for you to judge, but that you might be ruled and judged by it.

But if there be any so blind as to question either the truth, or the justice of the law of God, I shall briefly give you evidence of both.

And first, if you doubt whether this be the word of God or not, beside a hundred other texts, you may be satisfied with these few, Matt. xviii, 3, *Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven.* John iii, 3, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* 2 Cor. v, 17, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away ; behold, all things are become new.* Heb. xii, 14, *Without holiness no man shall see God.* Rom. viii, 8, 9, *They that are in the flesh cannot please God. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Psalm ix, 17, *The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.* Psalm xi, 5, *The Lord loveth the righteous, but the wicked his soul hateth.*

I need not add any more of that multitude which speaks the like: if thou be a man that believest the word of God, here is already enough to satisfy thee, the wicked must be converted or condemned. You must either confess that this is true, or say plainly you will not believe the word of God. And if once you be come to that pass, it is not likely you will be long out of hell. But if you tell God plainly you will not believe him, blame him not if he warn you no more: for to what purpose should he warn you, if you will not believe him? Should he send an angel from heaven to you, it seems you would not believe. For an angel can speak but the word of God: and if an angel should bring you any other Gospel, you are not to receive it, but to hold him accursed. And surely there is no angel to be believed before the Son of God, who came from the Father to bring up this doctrine. And if you stand on these terms with God, I shall leave you till he deal with you in a more convincing way. God has a voice that will make you hear. Though he *entreat* you to hear the voice of his Gospel, he will *make* you hear the voice of his condemning sentence. We cannot make you *believe* against your wills; but God will make you *feel* against your wills.

But why will you not believe this word of God, which tells us that the wicked must be converted, or condemned? It is because you judge it unlikely that God should be so unmerciful; you think it cruelty to damn men everlast-

ingly for so small a thing as a sinful life. And this leads us to the second thing, which is, to justify the equity of God in his laws and judgments. And, first, I think you will not deny that it is most suitable to an immortal soul, to be ruled by laws which promise an immortal reward, and threaten an endless punishment. Otherwise the law would not be suited to the nature of the subject, who will not be fully ruled by any lower means than the hopes or fears of everlasting things : as it is in the case of temporal punishment, if a law were now made that the most heinous crimes should be punished with a hundred years' captivity, this might be of some efficacy, it being equal to our lives.— But if there had been no other penalties before the flood, when men lived eight or nine hundred years, it would not have been sufficient, because men would know that they might have so many hundred years' impunity afterward. So it is in our present case.

2. When you find in the word of God that *so it is* and *so it will be*, do you think yourselves fit to contradict this word? Will you call your Maker to the bar, and examine his word? will you sit upon him, and judge him by the law of your conceits? Are you wiser and better than he? Must the God of heaven come to school to you to learn wisdom? Must Infinite Wisdom learn of folly? Must the Almighty stand at the bar of a worm? O horrid arrogancy of senseless dust! Shall every mole, or clod, or dunghill, accuse the sun of darkness, and

undertake to illuminate the world ? Where were you when the Almighty made the laws that he did not call you to his council ; surely he made them before you were born, without desiring your advice ; and you came into the world too late to reverse them ; if you could have done so great a work, you should have stepped out of nothing, and have contradicted Christ when he was on earth, or Moses before him, or have saved Adam and his sinful progeny from the threatened death, that so there might have been no need of Christ.

3. If sin be such an evil that it requires the *death of Christ* for its expiation, no wonder if it deserve our everlasting misery.

4. And methinks you should perceive, that it is not possible for the best of men, much less for the wicked, to be competent judges of the desert of sin. Alas, we are all both blind and partial. You can never know fully the desert of sin till you fully know the evil of sin : and you can never fully know the evil of sin, till you fully know the excellency of the soul which it deforms : no, nor till you know the infinite excellency, almightyess, and holiness, of that God against whom it is committed.— When you fully know these, you shall fully know the desert of sin. You know that the offender is too partial to judge the law, or the proceeding of his judge.

5. Can you think that unholy souls are *fit for heaven* ? Alas, they cannot *love God here*, nor do him any service which he can accept. They

are contrary to God, they loathe that which he most loves ; and love that which he abhors ; they are incapable of that imperfect communion with him, which his saints here partake of. How then can they live in that most perfect love of him, and full delight and communion with him, which is the blessedness of heaven !

USE.

I BESEECH you now, all that love your souls, that instead of quarrelling with God and his word, you will presently stoop to it, and use it for your good. You must, ere long, be *converted* or *condemned* ; there is no other way, but turn or die. When God who cannot lie has told you this, when you hear it from the Maker and Judge of the world ; it is time for him that has ears to hear. By this time you may see what you have to trust to. You are but dead and damned men, except you will be converted. Should I tell you otherwise, I should deceive with a lie. Should I hide this from you, I should undo you, and be guilty of your blood. You see then, though this be a rough, unwelcome doctrine, it is such as we must preach and you must hear. It is easier to hear of hell than to feel it. Hell would not be so full, if people were but willing to know their case, and to hear and think of it. The reason why so few escape it, is because they strive not to enter in at the straight gate of conversion, and to go the narrow way of holiness, while they have time : and they strive not, because they are not awakened to a lively feeling

of the danger that they are in ; and they are not awakened, because they are loath to hear, or think of it ; and that is partly through foolish tenderness and carnal self-love ; and partly because they do not well believe the word that threatens it. If you will not thoroughly believe this truth, methinks the weight of it should force you to remember it ; and it should follow you, and give no rest till you were converted. If you had but once heard this word, by the voice of an angel, *Thou must be converted or condemned ; turn or die* : would it not fasten on your mind, and haunt you night and day ? so that in your sinning you would remember it ; as if the voice were still in your ears, *Turn or die !* O happy were your souls if it might thus work upon you, and never be forgotten, or let you alone till it have driven home your hearts to God. But if you will cast it out by forgetfulness, or unbelief, how can it work to your conversion and salvation ? But take this with you to your sorrow, though you may put it out of your minds, you cannot put it out of the Bible : but there it will stand as a sealed truth, which you shall experimentally know for ever, that there is no other way but *turn or die*.

O what is the reason then that the hearts of sinners are not pierced with such a weighty truth. Believe it, this drowsy, this careless temper, will not last long. Conversion and condemnation are both of them awakening things : and one of them will make you feel ere long. I can foretell it as truly as if I saw it with my

eyes, that either grace or hell will shortly bring these matters to the quick, and make you say, "What have I done? What a foolish, wicked course have I taken?" The scornful and the stupid state of sinners will last but a little while. As soon as they either turn or die, the presumptuous dream will be at an end; and then their wits and feelings will return.

But there are two things which are like to harden the unconverted, except they can be taken out of the way; and that is, the misunderstanding of those two words, the **WICKED** and **TURN**. Some think it is true, the wicked must turn or die: but what is that to me? I am not wicked, though I am a sinner, as all men are. Others think, *It is true that we must turn from our evil ways; but I am turned long ago.* And thus, while wicked men think they are not wicked, but are already converted, we lose all our labour in persuading them to turn. I shall, therefore, before I go any farther, tell you who are meant by the wicked, and who they are that must turn or die; and also, what is meant by turning; and who they are that are truly converted.

You may observe, no man is a wicked man that is converted; and no man is a converted man that is wicked; so that to be a wicked man and an unconverted man, is all one. And therefore, in opening one we shall open both.

Before I can tell you what either wickedness or conversion is, I must go to the bottom and fetch up the matter from the beginning.

It pleased the great Creator of the world to make three sorts of living creatures. Angels he made pure spirits without flesh, and therefore he made them only for heaven, and not to dwell on earth. Brutes were made flesh ; and therefore they were made only for earth, and not for heaven. Man is of a middle nature, between both, as partaking of both flesh and spirit : and therefore he was made both for heaven and earth. But as his flesh was made to be but a servant to his spirit, so is he made for earth, but as his way to heaven ; and not that earth shall be his home, or happiness. The blessed state which man was made for, was to behold the glorious majesty of the Lord, and to praise him among the holy angels, and to love him, and be filled with his love for ever. And as this was the end which man was made for, so God gave him means fitted to attain it. These means were principally two. First, the right inclination, and disposition of the mind of man. Secondly, the right ordering of his life and practice. For the first, God suited the disposition of man to his end ; giving him such knowledge of God as was fit for him in his present state, and a heart inclined to God in holy love. But yet he did not confirm him in this condition ; but, having made him a free agent, he left him in the hands of his own free will. For the second, God did that which belonged to him ; that is, he gave man a perfect law, requiring him to continue in the love of God, and perfectly to obey him. By the wilful breach of this law, man did not only

forfeit his hopes of everlasting life, but also turned his heart from God, and fixed it on these lower things ; and hereby blotted out the spiritual image of God from his soul. So that man did both fall short of the glory of God, which was his end, and put himself out of the way by which he should have attained it ; and this both as to the frame of his heart, and of his life. The holy inclination of his soul to God, he lost ; and instead of it he contracted an inclination to the pleasing of his flesh by earthly things : growing strange to God, and acquainted with the creature ; and the course of his life was suited to the inclination of his heart : he lived to his own will and not to God : he sought the creature for the pleasing of his flesh, instead of seeking to please the Lord. With this nature, or *corrupt inclination*, we are all now born into the world ; for *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ?* Job xiv, 4. As a lion has a fierce and cruel nature, before he does devour ; and as an adder has a venomous nature before she stings ; so in our very infancy we have those sinful natures, or inclinations, before we think, or speak, or do amiss. And hence springs all the sin of our lives. And not only so, but when God has, of his mercy, provided as a remedy, even the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the Saviour of our souls, and bring us back to God, we naturally love our present state, and are loath to be brought out of it, and therefore are set against the means of our recovery ; and though custom has taught us to thank Christ for his good

will, yet we refuse his remedies, and desire to be excused when we are commanded to take the medicines which he offers, and are called to forsake all, and follow him to God and glory.

In these few words you have a true description of our natural state ; and consequently of a wicked man. For every man that is in this state of corrupted nature is a wicked man, and in a state of death.

By this you may understand what it is to be *converted* ; to which end you must farther know, that the mercy of God, not willing that man should perish in his sin, provided a remedy by causing his Son to take our nature upon him, and being in one person, God and man, to become a Mediator between God and man ; and by dying for our sins on the cross, to ransom us from the curse of God, and the power of the devil : and having thus redeemed us, the Father has thus delivered us into his hands *as his own*. Hereupon the Father and the Mediator make a new law and covenant for man : not like the first, which gave life to none but the perfectly obedient, and condemned man for every sin : but Christ has made a law of grace, or a promise of pardon and everlasting life, to all that by true repentance and by faith in Christ are converted unto God. Like an act of oblivion, which is made by a prince to a company of rebels, on condition they will lay down their arms and come in, and be loyal subjects for the time to come.

But, because the Lord knows that the heart of man is grown so wicked that men will not accept of the remedy if they be left to themselves, therefore the Holy Ghost has undertaken it as his office to inspire the apostles, and seal the Scripture by miracles ; and to illuminate and convert the souls of men.

So that you see, as there are three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost ; so each of these persons have their several works which are eminently ascribed to them.

The Father's works were, to create us, to rule us, as his rational creatures, by the law of nature ; and judge us thereby : and in mercy to provide us a Redeemer when we were lost ; and to send his Son, and accept his ransom.

The works of the Son for us were these : to ransom and redeem us by his sufferings and righteousness ; to give out the promise or law of grace ; and rule and judge the world as their Redeemer, on terms of grace, and to make intercession for us, that the benefits of his death may be communicated, and to send the Holy Ghost, which the Father also does by the Son.

The works of the Holy Ghost for us are these ; to indite the Holy Scriptures by inspiring and guiding the prophets and apostles ; and sealing the word by his miraculous gifts and works : and the illuminating, and exciting the ordinary ministers of the Gospel ; and so enabling them and helping them to publish that

word : and by the same word, illuminating and converting the souls of men. So that as you could not have been *reasonable creatures*, if the Father had not created you, nor have had any *access to God*, if the Son had not redeemed you ; so neither can you be saved, except the Holy Ghost do sanctify you.

So you may see the several causes of this work. The Father sends the Son ; the Son redeems us and makes the promise of grace : the Holy Ghost indites and seals this Gospel : the apostles are the secretaries of the Spirit to write it : the preachers of the Gospel proclaim it, and persuade men to embrace it ; and the Holy Ghost makes their preaching effectual, by opening the hearts of men to entertain it. And all this to repair the image of God upon the soul, to whom it is revolted ; and to take it off the creature and set it again upon God ; and so to turn the current of the life into a heavenly course, which before was earthly ; and all this by the entertainment of Christ, by faith, who is the physician of the soul.

By this you may see what it is to be *wicked*, and what it is to be converted. Which I think will be yet plainer, if I describe them as consisting of their several parts : and for the first, a *wicked man* may be known by these three things :—

First, He is one who places his chief content on earth, and loves the creatures more than God ; and his fleshly prosperity above the heavenly felicity : he savours the things of the

flesh, but neither discerns, nor savours the things of the Spirit : though he will say that heaven is better than earth, yet does he not really so esteem it. If he might be sure of earth, he would let go heaven ; and had rather stay here than be removed thither. A life of perfect holiness in the sight of God, and in his love, and praises for ever in heaven, do not find such liking with his heart as a life of health, and wealth, and honour upon earth. And though he falsely profess that he loves God above all ; yet indeed he never felt the power of Divine love, but his mind is more set on the world or fleshly pleasures, than on God. In a word, whoever loves earth above heaven, and fleshly prosperity more than God, is a wicked, unconverted man.

On the other side, a *converted man* is enlightened to discern the loveliness of God : and so believes the glory that is to be had with God, that his heart is set more upon it than on any thing in this world. He had rather see the face of God, and live in his everlasting love, than have all the wealth or pleasures of the world. He sees that all things else are vanity ; that nothing but God can fill the soul : and therefore, let the world go which way it will, he lays up his treasures and hopes in heaven ; and for that he is resolved to let go all. As the fire mounts upward, and the needle that is touched with the loadstone turns to the north : so the converted soul is inclined to God. Nothing else can satisfy him : nor can he find any content and rest but in his love. In a word, all that are converted, esteem and

love God better than all the world, and the heavenly felicity is dearer to them than their fleshly prosperity.

Secondly, *A wicked man* is one that makes it the *principal business of his life to prosper in the world*, and attain his fleshly ends. And though he may read and hear, and do much in the outward duties of religion, and forbear disgraceful sins ; yet this is but by the by, and he never makes it the business of his life to please God, and attain everlasting glory. He puts off God, with the leavings of the world, and gives him no more service than the flesh can spare.

On the contrary, a converted man is one that makes it the *principal business of his life to please God*, and to be saved : and takes all the blessings of this life, but as accommodations in his journey toward another life, and uses the creature in subordination to God ; he loves a holy life, and longs to be more holy ; he has no motions of sin, but what he hates, and longs, and prays, and strives to be rid of. The bent of his life is for God : therefore he dare not wilfully live in any known sin. There is nothing in this world so dear unto him, but he can give it up to God, and forsake it for the hopes of glory.

Thirdly, The soul of the wicked man did never truly discern and relish the mystery of redemption, or thankfully entertain an offered Saviour, nor is he taken up with the rule of the Redeemer, nor willing to be ruled by him, that he may be saved from the guilt and power of his sins, and be recovered unto God ! but his heart is

insensible of this unspeakable benefit, and is quite against the healing means, by which he should be recovered. He never resigns up his soul to Christ, and to the motions and conduct of his word and Spirit. On the contrary, the *converted* soul, having felt himself undone by sin ; and perceiving that he has lost his peace with God and the hopes of heaven, and is in danger of everlasting misery, does thankfully entertain the tidings of redemption ; and believing in the Lord Jesus as his only Saviour, resigns up himself to him for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He takes Christ as the life of his soul, and lives by him, and uses him as a salve for every sore, admiring the wisdom and love of God, in this wonderful work of man's redemption. In a word, Christ does even dwell in his heart by faith, and the life which he now lives is by faith of the Son of God, who has loved him, and given himself for him. Yea, it is not so much he that lives, as Christ in him.

You see now who are the wicked and who are the converted. Ignorant people think that if a man be no swearer, or curser, or railer, or drunkard, or fornicator, or extortioner, nor wrong any body in his dealings, and if he go to church and say his prayers, he cannot be a wicked man. Or if a man who has been guilty of drunkenness, swearing, or the like vices, do but forbear them, they think that this is a converted man. Others think, if a man who has been an enemy and scorner of religion, do but approve it, and join

himself with good men, and be hated for it by the wicked, this must needs be a converted man. And some are so foolish as to think they are converted by taking up some new opinion, or by falling into some party, as Anabaptists, Quakers, Papists, or such like. And some think if they have but been affrighted by the fears of hell, and thereupon have purposed and promised amendment, and taken up a life of civil behaviour and outward religion, this must needs be true conversion. And these are the poor deluded souls that are like to lose the benefit of all our persuasions ; and when they hear that the wicked must *turn or die*, they think that this is not spoken to them ; for they are not *wicked*, but are *turned* already. And therefore it is that Christ told some of the rulers of the Jews, who were more moral and civil than the common people, that *publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before them*, Matt. xxi, 31. Not that a harlot or gross sinner can be saved without conversion ; but because it was easier to make these gross sinners perceive their sin, and the necessity of a change.

O sirs, conversion is another kind of work than most are aware of: it is not a small matter to show man the amiable excellencies of God, till he be taken up with such love to him as cannot easily be quenched : to break the heart for sin, and make him fly for refuge to Christ, and thankfully embrace him as the life of his soul ; to have the very bent of the heart and life changed ; so that he renounces that which he took for

his felicity, and places his felicity where he never did before ; and lives not to the same end, and drives not on the same design in the world as formerly he did. He that is in Christ is *a new creature*; *old things are passed away; behold all things are become new*, 2 Cor. v, 17. He has a new understanding, a new will and resolution, new sorrows, and desires, and love, and delight ; new thoughts, new speeches, new company, (if possible,) and a new conversation. Sin, which before was a jesting matter with him, is now so odious, that he flies from it as from death. The world, which was so lovely in his eyes, does not appear but as vanity and vexation : God, who was before neglected, is now the only happiness of his soul : before, he was forgotten ; but now he is set next the heart, and all things must give place to him : and the heart is taken up in the attendance and observance of him ; and is grieved when he hides his face, and never thinks itself well without him. Christ himself, who was wont to be slightly thought of, is now his only hope and refuge, and he lives upon him as on his daily bread ; he cannot pray without him, nor rejoice without him, nor think, nor speak, nor live without him. Heaven itself, which before was looked upon but as a tolerable reserve, which he hoped might serve better than hell, when he could not stay any longer in the world, is now taken for his home, the place of his only hope and rest, where he shall see, and love, and praise that God, who has his heart already. The Bible, which was before to him

but as a common book, is now as the law of God, as a letter written to him from heaven, and subscribed with the name of the *Eternal Majesty*; it is the rule of his thoughts, and words, and deeds; the commands are binding, and the promises of it speak life to his soul. In short, he has a new end in his thoughts, and a new way in his endeavours, and therefore his heart and life are new. So that this is not a change in one or two, or twenty points; but in the whole soul and conversation.

Do you believe this, sirs, or do you not? Surely you dare not say you do not. These are not controversies, where one pious man is of one mind, and another of another; all Christians are agreed in this, and if you will not believe the God of truth, and that in a case where every sect and party believe him, you are utterly inexcusable.

But if you do believe this, how comes it to pass that you live so quietly in an unconverted state? Do you know that you are converted? Can you find this wonderful change upon your souls? Have you been thus born again, and made anew? If you cannot tell the day or week of your change, do you find that the work is done? And that you have such hearts as are before described? Alas, the most follow their worldly business, and little trouble their minds with such thoughts. And if they be but restrained from scandalous sins, and can say, *I am no whoremonger, or thief, or curser, or swearer, or tippler, or extortioner; I go to church and say*

my prayers, they think this is true conversion, and they shall be saved as well as any. Alas ! this is a foolish cheating of yourselves. This is too gross a neglect of your immortal souls. Can you make so light of heaven and hell ? Your corpses must shortly lie in the dust, and angels or devils will presently seize upon your souls, and every man and woman of you all will shortly be among other company, and in another case than now you are ; you will dwell in those houses but a little longer ; you will work in your shops and fields but a little longer ; you will sit in these seats and dwell on this earth but a little longer ; you will see with those eyes, and hear with those ears, and speak with those tongues, but a little longer ; and can you forget this ? O what a place will you be shortly in, of joy or torment ! O what a sight will you shortly see in heaven or hell ! O what thoughts will shortly fill your hearts with unspeakable delight or horror ! What work will you be employed in ! To praise the Lord with saints and angels, or to cry out in fire unquenchable with devils ! And should all this be forgotten ? And all this will be endless, and sealed up by an unchangeable decree. Eternity ! eternity ! will be the measure of your joys or sorrows, and can this be forgotten ? And all this is true, most *certainly true* : when you have gone up and down a little longer, and slept and awaked a few times more, you will be dead and gone, and find all true which now I tell you ; and can you now forget it ? You shall then remember that you read this

sermon, and that on *this day, and in this place*, you were remembered of these things ; and yet shall they be now so much forgotten ?

Beloved, if the Lord had not awakened me to believe and lay to heart these things myself, I should have perished for ever : but if he has made me sensible of them, it will constrain me to compassionate you. If your eyes were so far opened as to see hell, and you saw your neighbours that were unconverted dragged thither with hideous cries, though they were such as you accounted honest people on earth ; such a sight would make you warn all about you, lest they should go to that place of torment. Why, faith is a kind of sight ; it is the eye of the soul, the evidence of things not seen ; if I believe God, it is next to seeing : and therefore I beseech you excuse me if I be as earnest with you about these matters as if I had seen them. If I were to die to-morrow, and it were in my power to come again from another world and tell you what I had seen, would you not be willing to hear me ? And would you not believe and regard what I should tell you ? If I might preach one sermon to you after I am dead, and have seen what is done in the world to come, would you not plainly have me speak the truth, and would you not crowd to hear me ? And would you not lay it to heart ? But this must not be ; God has his appointed way of teaching you ; and he will not humour unbelievers so far as to send men from the dead to them, and to alter his established way : if any man quarrel

with the sun, God will not humour him so far as to set him up a clearer light. Friends, I beseech you regard me now, as you would do if I should come from the dead to you ; for I can give as full assurance of the truth of what I say to you, as if I had been there and seen it with my eyes ; for it is possible for one from the dead to deceive you. Believe this, or believe nothing.— Believe, and obey this, or you are undone : now as ever you believe the word of God, and as ever you care for the salvation of your souls, let me beg of you this reasonable request ; that you would, without any more delay, remember what you heard, and enter into an earnest search of your hearts, and say unto yourselves—“ Is it so indeed ? Must I turn or die ? Must I be converted or condemned ? It is time for me then to look about me before it be too late. O why did I not look after this till now ? Why did I venturesly put off so great a business ? Was I awake ? O blessed God, what a mercy is it that thou didst not cut off my life in all this while ! Well, God forbid that I should neglect this work any longer. What state is my soul in ? Am I converted, or am I not ? Was ever such a work done upon my soul ? Have I been illuminated by the word and Spirit of the Lord, to see the odiousness of sin, the need of a Saviour, the love of Christ, and the excellencies of God in glory ? Is my heart broken or humbled within me for my former life ? Have I thankfully entertained my Saviour and Lord, who offered himself with pardon and life to my soul ? Do I hate my

former sinful life, and the remnant of every sin that is in me ? Do I fly from them as my deadly enemies ? Do I give up myself to a life of holiness ? Do I love it, and delight in it ? Can I truly say that I am dead to the world ; and that I live for God, and the glory which he has promised ? Has heaven more of my estimation than earth ? And is God the dearest and highest in my soul ? Once, I am sure, I lived principally to the world and flesh, and God had nothing but some heartless services which the world could spare, and which were the leavings of the flesh. Is my heart now turned another way ? Have I a new design, and a new end, and a new train of holy affections ? Have I set my hopes and heart on heaven ? And is it the design of my heart and life to get well to heaven, and see the glorious face of God, and live in his everlasting love and praise ? Do I conquer all gross sins, and am I weary and willing to be rid of mine infirmities ? This is the state of a converted soul. And thus must it be with me, or I must perish. Is it thus with me indeed, or is it not ? It is time to get this doubt resolved before the dreadful Judge resolve it. I am not such a stranger to my own heart and life but I may perceive whether I am thus converted or not : if I be not, it will do me no good to flatter my soul with false hopes. I am resolved no more to deceive myself, but to endeavour to know truly whether I am converted ; that if I be, I may rejoice in it and glorify my gracious Lord, and comfortably go on till I reach the crown :

but if I be not, I may beg and seek after the grace that will convert me, and turn without any more delay : for if I find in time that I am out of the way, by the help of Christ I may turn and be recovered ; but if I stay till either my heart be forsaken of God in blindness and hardness, or till I be caught away by death ; it is then too late. There is no place for repentance and conversion then ; I know it must be now or never."

Sirs, this is my request to you, that you will but take your hearts to task and thus examine them, till you see, if it may be, whether you are converted or not. It undoes many thousands, that they think they are in the way to salvation when they are not ; and that they are converted, when it is no such thing. And then, when we call to them daily to *turn*, they think this concerns not them ; for they are turned already, and hope that they shall do well enough in the way that they are in, when alas ! all this while they live to the world and flesh, and are strangers to God and eternal life. And all this because we cannot persuade them to spend a few hours in examining of their states. Are there not many self-deceiving wretches that hear me this day, who never bestowed one hour in all their lives to examine their souls, and try whether they ever were truly converted or not ? O merciful God, who will care for such wretches that care no more for themselves ? If all that are in a state of damnation did but know it, they durst not continue in it. The greatest

hope that the devil has of bringing you to damnation without a rescue, is, by keeping you blindfold, and making you believe that you may do well enough in the way that you are in. If you knew that you were lost for ever, if you should die as you are; durst you sleep another night in the state you are in? Durst you live another day in it? Could you laugh or be merry in such a state? What, and not know but you may be snatched away to hell in an hour? Sure it would constrain you to forsake your former company and courses, and to betake yourselves to the way of holiness. Sure it would drive you to cry to God for a new heart, and to seek help of those who are fit to counsel you. There is none of you, sure, that *cares not* for being damned. Well then, I beseech you, presently make inquiry into your hearts, and give them no rest till you find out your condition; that if it be good, you may rejoice in it and go on; and if it be bad, you may presently look about you for recovery, as men who believe they must *turn or die*. What say you? Will you resolve and promise to be at so much labour for your own souls? Will you fall upon this self-examination? Is my request unreasonable?—Your consciences know it is not; resolve on it then before you stir, knowing how much it concerns your souls. I beseech you, for the sake of that God who does command you, at whose bar you will shortly all appear, that you will not deny this reasonable request. For the sake of those souls that must *turn or die*, I beseech you deny

me not : make it your business to understand your own conditions, and build upon sure ground, and know for a certainty whether you are converted or no ; and venture not your own souls on negligent security.

But perhaps you will say, What if we should find ourselves yet unconverted, what will we do then ? This question leads me to my second doctrine.

DOCTRINE II.

It is the promise of God that the wicked shall live, if they will turn to him.

THE Lord here professes that this is what he takes pleasure in, that the wicked *turn and live*. *Turn and live*, is as certain a truth, as *turn or die*. Sinners, there are none of you shall have cause to go home and say I preach despair to you. Are we used to shut up the door of mercy against you ? O that you would not shut it up against yourselves ! Are we used to tell you that God will have no mercy on you though you turn ? When did you hear a preacher say such a word ? You that bark at the preachers of the Gospel for desiring to keep you out of hell, and say that they preach despair ; tell me when did you ever hear any sober man say that there is no hope for you, though you repent and be converted ? No, it is quite the contrary, which we daily proclaim from the Lord ; that whoever is born again shall be saved : so far are we from persuading you to

despair of this, that we persuade you not to make any doubt of it. It is life and not death, which is the first part of our message to you ; our commission is to offer salvation, a speedy, glorious, everlasting salvation, to every one of you ; to the poorest beggar as well as to the greatest lord ; to the worst of you, even drunkards, swearers, thieves, yea, to the despisers and reproachers of the holy way of salvation ; we are commanded by the Lord our Master, to offer you a pardon for all that is past, if you will now at last return and live : we are commanded to beseech and entreat you to accept the offer, and to tell you what preparation is made by Christ, what mercy stays for you ; what patience waiteth on you ; what thoughts of kindness God has toward you ; and how happy, how certainly and unspeakably happy you may be if you will. We have indeed also a message of wrath and death ; yea, of a twofold wrath and death : but neither of them is our principal message : we must tell you of the wrath that is on you already, and the death that you are born under : but this is only to show you the need of mercy. For who will seek out for physic that knows not he is sick ? Our telling you of your misery is not that which makes you miserable, but that which drives you to seek for mercy. It is you that have brought this death upon yourselves. We tell you also of another death, and much greater torment, which will fall on those who will not be converted.

But as this is true ; so it is but the last, and

saddest part of our message. We are first to offer you mercy if you will turn ; and it is only those who will not turn nor hear the voice of mercy, to whom we must foretell damnation.— If you will cast away your transgressions, and come at the call of Christ, and be converted, we have not a word of damning wrath, or death, to speak against you. I do here, in the name of the Lord of life, proclaim to you all, to the worst of you, to the greatest, to the oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will but turn. There is mercy in God, there is sufficiency in the satisfaction of Christ, the promise is free, and full, and universal ; you may have life if you will but turn. But then, as you love your souls, remember what turning it is which the Scripture speaks of. It is not to amend the old house, but to pull down all and build anew, on Christ the rock and sure foundation.

Yourselves are witnesses now, that it is salvation and not damnation which is the great doctrine I preach to you ; and the first part of my message to you. Accept of this, and we shall go no farther ; for we would not trouble you with the name of damnation without necessity.

But if you will not be saved, there is no remedy, but damnation must take place. For there is no middle place between the two ; you must have either life or death.

And we are not only to offer you life ; but to show you the grounds on which we do it, and call you to believe that God does mean indeed

as he speaks ; that the promise is true, and extends conditionally to *you* as well as others.

If you ask, Where is our commission for this offer—among a hundred texts of Scripture : I will show it to you in these few :—

First, you see it here in my text, and in the following verses, and in the eighteenth of Ezekiel, as plain as can be spoken. And in 2 Cor. v, 17—21, you have the very sum of our commission : *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away : behold all things are become new.* And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself ; not imputing their trespasses to them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation : now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God : for he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

You see that we are commanded to offer life to *you all*, and to tell you from God, that if you will turn you may live.

Here you may safely trust your souls ; for the love of God is the fountain of this offer, John iii, 16 ; and the blood of the Son of God has purchased it : the faithfulness and truth of God are engaged to make the promise good : miracles have sealed the truth of it : preachers are sent through the world to proclaim it, the sacra-

ments are instituted for the solemn delivery of the mercy offered, to them that will accept it ; and the Spirit opens the heart to entertain it, and is itself the earnest of the full possession. So that the truth of it is past controversy, that the worst of you all, and every one of you, if you will but be *converted*, *may be saved*.

Indeed, if you believe that you shall be saved without conversion, then you believe a falsehood ; and if I should preach that to you, I should preach a lie : this were not to believe God, but the devil and your own deceitful hearts. God has his promise of life, and the devil has his promise of life. God's promise is *return and live* ; the devil's promise is, *you shall live whether you turn or not*. The words of God are as I have shown you, *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven*, Matt. xviii, 3. *Except a man be born again he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii, 3, 5. *Without holiness none shall see God*, Heb. xii, 14. The devil's word is, *You may be saved without being born again, or converted ; you may do well enough without being holy ; God does but frighten you ; he is more merciful than to do as he says ; he will be better to you than his word*. And alas ! the greatest part of the world believe this word of the devil before the word of God ; just as our first sin and misery came into the world. God said to our first parents, *If ye eat, ye shall die*. And the devil contradicts him and says, *Ye shall not die* ; and the woman believed the

devil before God. So now the Lord saith, *Turn or die*; and the devil says, *You shall not die, if you do but cry to God for mercy at last*. And this is the word which the world believes. O heinous wickedness, to believe the devil before God!

And yet this is not the worst: but blasphemously they call this a *believing and trusting God*, when they put him in the shape of Satan, who was a liar from the beginning; and when they believe that the word of God is a lie, they call this a *trusting God*, and say they believe in him, and trust on him for salvation. Where did ever God say that the unconverted shall be saved? Show such a word in Scripture. I challenge you if you can. Why this is the *devil's word*, and to believe it is to believe the *devil*. And do you call this *believing and trusting God*? There is enough in the word of God to comfort and strengthen the hearts of the sanctified; but not a word to strengthen the hands of wickedness, or to give men the least hope of being saved, though they are never sanctified.

But if you will *turn*, and come in the way of mercy, the mercy of the Lord is ready to entertain you. Then trust God for salvation, boldly and confidently; for he is engaged by his word to save you. He will be a father to none but his children, and he will save none but those that forsake the world, the devil, and the flesh, and come into his family, to be members of his Son, and have communion with his saints. But if they will not come in it is their own fault.

his doors are open. He keeps none back : he is still ready to receive you if you were but ready unfeignedly, and with all your hearts, to turn. And the fulness of his truth will yet more appear in the two following doctrines.

DOCTRINE III.

God takes pleasure in men's conversion and salvation ; not in their death or damnation : he had rather they would return and live, than go on and die.

FOR the proof of this point, I shall be very brief, because I suppose you believe it already.

1. The *gracious nature* of God has proclaimed, and frequently assured you of this, that he has no pleasure in your death.

2. If God had more pleasure in thy death than in thy conversion and life, he would not have so frequently commanded thee, in his word, to turn ; he would not have made thee such promises of life if thou wilt turn : he would not have persuaded thee to it by so many reasons. The tenor of his *Gospel* proves the point.

3. And his commission which he has given to the ministers of the Gospel does fully prove it. If God had taken more pleasure in thy damnation than in thy conversion and salvation, he would never have charged us to offer you mercy, and to teach you the way of life, both publicly and privately ; and to entreat and beseech you to turn and live ; to acquaint you with your sins, and tell you of your danger ; and to do all that possibly we can for your con-

version, and to continue patiently so doing, though you shall hate or abuse us for our pains. Would God have done this if he had taken pleasure in your death ?

4. It is proved also by the course of his providence. If God had rather you were damned than saved, he would not second his word with his works, and entice you by his daily kindness, and give you all the mercies of this life, which are means to *lead you to repentance*, Rom. ii, 4, and bring you so often under his rod, to force you into your wits : he would not set so many examples before your eyes, no, nor wait on you so patiently as he does from day to day, and year to year. These are not signs of one that takes pleasure in your death. If *this* had been his delight, how easily could he have had thee long ago in hell ! How oft before this could he have snatched thee away, in the midst of thy sins, with a curse, or oath, or lie in thy mouth ! When thou wast last in thy drunkenness, or deriding the ways of God, how easily could he have stopped thy breath, and made thee sober in another world ! Alas ! how small a matter is it for the Almighty to rule the tongue of the profanest railer, and tie the hands of the most malicious persecutor, or calm the fury of the bitterest of his enemies, and make them know that they are but worms ! If he did but frown upon thee thou wouldest drop into thy grave. If he gave commission to one of his angels to go and destroy ten thousand sinners, how quickly would it be done ! How easily can he lay thee upon

the bed of languishing, and make thee lie roaring there in pain, and eat the words of reproach which thou hast spoken against his servants, his word, his worship, and his holy ways ! how easily can he lay that flesh under groans, and make it more loathsome than the dung of the earth ! That flesh which must now have what it loves, and must not be displeased, though God be displeased ; and must be humoured in meat, and drink, and clothes, whatever God say to the contrary, how quickly would the frown of God consume it ! When thou wast passionately defending thy sin, and quarrelling with them that would have drawn thee from it, and pleading for the works of darkness, how easily could God have snatched thee away in a moment, and set thee before his dreadful majesty, (where thou shouldest see ten thousand times ten thousand glorious angels waiting on his throne) and have asked thee, *What hast thou now to say against thy Creator, his truth, his servants, or his holy ways ? Now plead thy cause, and make the best of it thou canst. Now, what canst thou say in excuse of thy sins ? Now, give an account of thy time, and of all the mercies thou hast had.* O how thy stubborn heart would have melted, and thy countenance have been appalled, and thy stout words turned into speechless silence or dreadful cries ; if God had but set thee thus at his bar, and pleaded his own cause with thee ! How easily can he, at any time, say to thy guilty soul, *Come away, and live in that flesh no more till the resurrec-*

tion. And it cannot resist. A word of his mouth would take off the poise of thy present life, and then all thy parts and powers would stand still. And if he were to say to thee, *Live no longer*, or *live in hell*, thou couldest not disobey.

But God has done none of this; but has patiently foreborne thee, and mercifully upheld thee; and given thee that breath which thou didst breathe out against him, and given thee those mercies which thou didst sacrifice to thy flesh, and afforded thee that provision which thou spakest to satisfy thy greedy appetite: he gave thee every minute of that time which thou didst waste in idleness or drunkenness. And does not all this patience and mercy show that he desires not thy damnation? Can the candle burn without the oil? Can your houses stand without the earth to bear them? As well as you can live an hour without the support of God. And why did he so long support thy life, but to see when thou wouldest bethink thee of the folly of thy ways, and return and live?—Will any man purposely put arms into his enemy's hands to resist him? Or hold a candle to a murderer who is killing his children? Surely it is to see whether thou wilt at last return and live, that God has so long waited on thee.

5. It is farther proved by the sufferings of his Son, that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked; would he have ransomed them from death at so dear a rate? Would he have astonished angels and men by his condescen-

sion ? Would God have dwelt in the flesh, and come in the form of a servant, and have lived a life of suffering, and died a cursed death for sinners, if he had taken pleasure in their death ? Suppose you saw him praying with the drops of blood trickling from him instead of sweat, or suffering a cursed death upon the cross, and pouring out his soul as a sacrifice for our sins ; would you have thought these the signs of one that delights in the death of the wicked ? If you had seen and heard him weeping and bemoaning the state of disobedience in impenitent people, or complaining of their stubbornness, as Matt. xxiii, 37, *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how oft would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !* Or if you had seen and heard him on the cross, praying for his persecutors, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ;* would you have suspected that he had delighted in the death of the wicked, even of those that perish by their wilful unbelief ? When *God hath so loved* (not only loved, but *so loved*) *as to give his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life :* he has proved against the malice of men and devils, that he takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but had rather they would *turn and live.*

6. Lastly, If all this will not satisfy you, take his own word, who knows best his own mind, or at least believe his oath : but this leads me to the fourth doctrine.

DOCTRINE IV.

The Lord hath confirmed to us by his oath that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but had rather that he should turn and live; that he may leave man no pretence to question the truth of it.

If you dare question his word, I hope you dare not question his oath. As Christ has solemnly protested that the unconverted cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven: so God has sworn that his pleasure is not in their death, but in their conversion and life. And as the apostle says, Heb. vi, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, *Because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself. For men verily swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation, is to them an end of all strife.* Wherein God willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, he might have a strong consolation, who had fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast. If there be any man who cannot reconcile this truth with the damnation of the wicked, that is owing to his own ignorance; he has no pretence left to deny or question therefore the truth of the point in hand: for this is confirmed by the oath of God, and therefore must not be distorted to reduce it to other points; but doubtful points must rather be reduced to it, and certain truths

must be believed to agree with it, though our shallow brains hardly discern the agreement.

USE.

I do now entreat thee, if thou be an unconverted sinner who hearest these words, that thou wouldest bethink thyself awhile, who is it that takes pleasure in thy sin and damnation ? Certainly it is not God ; he has sworn for his part that he takes no pleasure in it. And I know it is not the pleasing of him that you intend in it. You dare not say that you drink, and swear, and neglect holy duties, and quench the motions of the Spirit to please God. That were as if you should reproach the prince, and break his laws, and seek his death, and say you did all this to please him.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin and death ? Not any that bear the image of God, for they must be like minded to him.—God knows it is small pleasure to your teachers, to see you wilfully run into the flames of hell. Alas ! to foresee your everlasting torments, and know not how to prevent them, is to see how near you are to hell, and we cannot make you believe it and consider it. To see how easily, how certainly you might escape, if we knew but how to make you willing ? How fair you are for everlasting salvation, if you would but turn and do your best, and make it the care and business of your lives ! but you will not do it ! Do you think that is a pleasant thing to us ?

Again, it is none of your godly friends. Alas !

it is the grief of their souls to see your misery, and they lament for you many a time when you give them little thanks for it, and when you have no hearts to lament for yourselves.

Who is it then that takes pleasure in your sin ? It is none but the three great enemies of God, whom you renounced in your baptism.

1. The devil takes pleasure in your sin and death : for this is the end of all his temptations. You cannot please him better than to go on in sin : how glad is he when he sees thee go to the ale-house, and when he hears thee curse, or swear, or rail ! These are his delight.

2. The wicked are also delighted in it, for it is agreeable to their nature.

3. But I know, for all this, that it is not the pleasing of the devil that you intend ; but it is your *own flesh*, the greatest and most dangerous enemy. It is the flesh that would be pleased in meat, and drink, and clothing ; that would be pleased in company, and applause, and credit with the world ; and this is the gulf that devours all ; this is the very God you serve. For the Scripture says of such, *That their belly is their god*, Phil. iii, 19.

But I beseech you stay a little and consider the business.

Your *flesh* is pleased with your sin : but is your conscience pleased ? Does not it tell you sometimes, that all is not well, and that your case is not so safe as you make it to be ? And should not your soul and conscience be pleased before that corrupt flesh ? Again, is not your

flesh, preparing for its own displeasure also ? It loves the bait ; but does not love the hook ! It loves the strong drink and sweet morsels ; it loves its ease, its sports, and merriment ; it loves to be rich and well spoken of by men, and to be somebody in the world : but does it love the curse of God ? Does it love to stand trembling before his bar, and to be judged to everlasting fire ? Does it love to be tormented with devils for ever ? Take all together ; for there is no separating sin and hell. If you will keep one you must have the other. If death and hell be pleasant to you, no wonder then if you go on in sin : but if they be not, then what if sin were ever so pleasant, is it worth the loss of life eternal ? Is a little drink, or meat, or ease ; is the good word of sinners, or the riches of the world, to be valued above the joys of heaven ? Or are they worth the sufferings of eternal fire ? These questions should be considered before you go any farther, by every man that hath reason to consider, and believes he has a soul to save or lose.

Well, the Lord here swears that he has no pleasure in your death, but had rather that you would turn and live. If yet you will go on, and die rather than turn, remember it was not to please God that you did it : it was to please the world, and to please yourselves. And if men will *damn themselves to please themselves*, and run into endless *torments for delight* : what remedy but they must take what they get by it, and repent it in another manner, when it is too late.

DOCTRINE V.

So earnest is God for the conversion of sinners, that he doubles his commands and exhortations with vehemency: Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?

Is there ever an unconverted sinner that hears these vehement words of God? Is there ever a man or woman that is yet a stranger to the renewing, sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost? Hearken then to the voice of your Maker, and turn to him by Christ, without delay. Would you know the will of God? why this is his will, that you presently turn. Shall the living God send so earnest a message to his creatures, and should they not obey? Hearken then, all ye that live after the flesh, the Lord that gave thee thy breath, hath sent a message to thee from heaven; and this is his message, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* He that has ears to hear, let him hear. Shall the voice of Eternal Majesty be neglected? If he do but terribly thunder, thou art afraid. O but *this* voice does more nearly concern thee. If he did but tell thee, thou shalt die to-morrow, thou wouldest not make light of it. O but this word concerns thy life or death everlasting. It is both a command and exhortation. As if he had said to thee, "I charge thee upon the allegiance which thou owest me, thy Creator and Redeemer, that thou renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil, and turn to me, that thou mayest live.

I condescend to entreat thee, as thou either lovest or fearest him that made thee ; as thou lovest thine own life, even thine everlasting life, turn and live : as ever thou wouldest escape eternal misery, turn, turn, for why wilt thou die ?" And is there a heart in man, in a reasonable creature, that can refuse such a message, such a command, such an exhortation as this ? What a thing then is the heart of man !

Hearken then, all that love yourselves, all that regard your own salvation ; here is the joyfulest message that ever was sent to the ears of man, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?* You are not yet shut up under desperation. Here is mercy offered you : turn, and you shall have it. With what joyful hearts would you receive these tidings ! I know this is not the first time that you have heard them : but how have you regarded them, or how do you regard them now ? Hear, all you ignorant, careless sinners, the word of the Lord ! Hear, all ye gluttons, drunkards, whoremongers and swearers, railers and backbiters, slanderers and liars : *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?*

Hear, all ye cold and outside professors, all that are strangers to the life of Christ, and never knew the power of his resurrection, never felt your hearts warmed with his love : *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?*

Hear, all that are void of God, whose hearts are not toward him, nor taken up with the hopes of glory, but set more on earthly prosperity and delights, than on the joys of heaven ; all ye that

are religious but by the by, and give God no more than your flesh can spare : that have not denied yourselves and forsaken all that you have for Christ ; but have one thing in the world so dear that you cannot spare it for them, but will rather venture on his displeasure than forsake it, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die ?*

If you never heard it, or observed it before, remember that you were told from the word of God this day, that if you will but turn you may live : and if you will not turn you shall surely die.

What now will you do ? What is your resolution ? Will you turn or will you not ? Halt no longer between two opinions : if the Lord be God, follow him : if your flesh be God, then serve it still. If heaven be better than earth, come away and seek another country, and lay up your treasures where moths or rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal ; and with all your might, seek the kingdom that cannot be moved : employ your minds on a higher design, and turn the stream of your care and labours another way than formerly you have done. But if earth be better than heaven, then keep it and follow it still. Are you resolved what to do ? If you be not, I will set a few more considerations before you.

Consider, first, *what preparations mercy has made for your salvation* ; and what pity it is that man should be damned after all this. God has made to thee a free act of oblivion, and a free deed of gift of Christ and life, and offers it

to thee, and entreats thee to accept it, and it may be thine if thou wilt. For he *was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.* Sinners, we are commanded to deliver this message to you all, as from the Lord, *Come, for all things are now ready,* Luke xiv, 17.—*Are all things ready, and are you unready?* God is ready to pardon all that you have done against him, if you will but come. As long as you have sinned, he is ready to cast all behind his back if you will but come. Though you have been prodigals, and run away from God, and have stayed so long, he is ready to meet you, and embrace you in his arms, if you will but turn. Even the swinish drunkards may find God ready to bid them welcome, if they will but come. Does not this turn thy heart within thee? O sinner, if thou have a heart of flesh, and not of stone, methinks this shall melt it. Shall the dreadful infinite Majesty of heaven wait for thy returning, and be ready to receive thee, who hast abused him, and forgotten him so long? Shall he delight in thy conversion, who might, at any time, glorify his justice in thy damnation, and yet does it not melt thy heart within thee, and art thou not ready to come in? Hast thou not as much reason to be ready to come, as God has to invite thee and bid thee welcome?

Christ has done his part on the *cross*, and made such way for thee to the Father, that on *his account* thou mayest be welcome if thou wilt come, and yet art thou not ready?

A *pardon* is already expressly granted, and offered thee in the Gospel. And yet art thou not ready ?

The *ministers* of the Gospel are ready to assist thee, to instruct thee, and pronounce peace to thy soul ; they are ready to pray for thee, and to seal thy pardon by the administration of the holy sacrament, and yet art thou not ready ?

Yea, *heaven* itself is ready : the Lord will receive thee in the glory of his saints, as vile a beast as thou hast been, if thou wilt but be cleansed ; thou mayest have a place before his throne : his *angels* will be ready to guard thy soul to the place of joy, if thou do but unfeignedly come in. And is God *ready*, the *sacrifice of Christ ready, and pardon ready*? Are *ministers ready, and heaven itself ready, and angels ready*, and all these waiting for thy conversion, and yet art *thou not ready*? What, not ready to *live*, when thou hast been *dead* so long ? Not ready to come to thy *right understanding* when thou hast been *beside thyself so long*? Art thou not ready to lay hold on *Christ* who would deliver thee when thou art even ready to *drown and sink* into damnation ? Art thou not ready to be saved from hell when thou art ready to be cast into it ? Alas, man, dost thou know what thou doest ? If you die unconverted, there is no doubt to be made of thy damnation, and thou art not sure to live an hour ; and yet thou art not ready to turn and come in ! O miserable wretch ! hast thou not served the devil and the flesh long enough ? Hast thou not yet enough

of sin? Is it so good to thee, or so profitable for thee? Dost thou know what it is, that thou wouldest have *more* of it? hast thou had so many *calls*, and so many *mercies*, and so many *blows*, and so many *examples*: hast thou seen so many laid in their grave, and yet art thou not ready to let go thy sins and come to Christ? What, after so many convictions, and gripes of conscience, after so many purposes, and promises, are thou not yet ready to turn and live? O that thy eyes, thy heart, were opened to know how fair an offer is now made to thee! and what a joyful message it is that we are sent on, to bid thee come, for all things are ready.

2. Consider also what *calls* thou hast to *turn* and *live*, how *many*, how *loud*, how *earnest*, how *dreadful*, and yet what encouraging, joyful calls.

For the principal inviter, it is God himself. He that commands heaven and earth, commands thee to turn, *and now without* delay, to turn: he commands the sun to run its course, and to rise upon thee every morning; and though it is so glorious a creature, yet it obeys him, and fails not one minute of its appointed time. He commands all the planets, and all the orbs of heaven, and they obey; he commands the sea to ebb and flow, and the whole creation to keep its course, and all obey him: the angels of heaven obey his will, when he sends them to minister to such silly worms as we on earth. And yet if he commands but a sinner to turn, he will not obey him: *he* only

thinks himself wiser than God, and *he* cavils, and will not obey.

If thou hadst any love in thee, thou wouldest know the voice, and say, *O this is my Father's call: how can I find in my heart to disobey?* If thou hadst any sense in thee, at least, thou wouldest say, *This call is the dreadful voice of God, and who dare disobey?* God is not a man that thou shouldest trifle and play with him: wilt thou yet go on and despise his word, and resist his Spirit, and stop thine ear against his call? Who is it that will have the worst of this? Dost thou know whom thou disobeyest and contendest with, and what thou art doing? It were a far wiser and easier task for thee to contend with the thorns, and spurn them with thy bare feet, and beat them with thy bare hands, or put thy head into the burning fire.—*Be not deceived, God will not be mocked.* Whoever else be mocked, God will not: you had better play with the fire in your thatch, than with the fire of his burning wrath. *For our God is a consuming fire,* Heb. xii, 29. O how unmeet a match art thou for God! *It is a fearful thing to fall into his hands,* Heb. x, 31; and therefore it is a fearful thing to contend with him or to resist him. As you love your own soul, take heed what you do. What will you say, if he begin in wrath to plead with you? What will you do, if he take you once in hand? Will you then strive against his judgment, as now ye do against his grace? “Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle?

I would go through them ; I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." It is an unequal combat for the briars and stubble to make war with the fire.

You see *who it is that calls you*. Consider also *by what instruments, and how often, and how earnestly he does it*.

1. Every leaf of the blessed book of God has as it were a voice, and calls out, *Turn and live ; turn, or thou wilt die*. How canst thou open it, or read a leaf or hear a chapter, and not perceive God bids thee *turn* ?

2. The voice of many a *motion* of the *Spirit* secretly urges thee to *turn*.

3. The voice of *conscience*. Art thou not sometimes convinced that it is not well with thee ? and does not thy conscience tell thee that thou must be a new man, and take a new course ?

4. The voice of all the *works* of God. For they also are God's books, that teach thee this lesson, by showing thee his greatness, and wisdom, and goodness, and calling thee to observe them and admire the Creator. Psalm xix, 1, 2, *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge*. Every time the sun rises upon thee, it calls thee to *turn*, as if it should say, " What do I travel and compass the world for, but to declare to men the glory of their Maker,

and to light them to do his work ? And do I still find thee doing the work of sin, and sleeping out thy life in negligence ! Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

5. The voice of every *mercy* thou dost possess. If thou couldest but hear and understand them, they all cry unto thee, *Turn*. Why does the earth bear thee, but to seek and serve the Lord ? Why does it afford thee its fruit, but to serve him ? Why do all the creatures serve thee with their labours, and their lives, but that thou mightest serve the Lord of them and thee ? Why does he give thee time, health, and strength, but to serve him ? Why hast thou meat, and drink, and clothes, but for his service ? Hast thou any thing which thou hast not received ? And if thou didst receive them, it is reason thou shouldst bethink thee, *from whom*, and to what *end* and *use* thou didst receive them. Didst thou never cry to him for help in thy distress ? And didst thou not then understand that it was thy part to turn and serve him, if he would deliver thee ? He has done his part and spared thee yet longer, and tried thee another and another year, and yet dost thou not turn ! How many years has God looked for the fruits of love and holiness from thee, and has found none ? And yet he has spared thee ! How many a time, by thy wilful ignorance, and carelessness, and disobedience, hast thou provoked justice to say, *Cut him down ; why cumbereth he the ground ?* And yet

mercy has prevailed, and patience has forbore the killing, damning blow, to this day. If thou hadst the understanding of a man within thee, thou must know that all this calls thee to *turn*.

6. Moreover, the voice of every *affliction* calls thee to *make haste and turn*. Sickness and pain cry, *Turn*; and poverty, and loss of friends, and every chastening rod, cry, *Turn* and *yet* wilt thou not hearken to the call?

7. Yea, thine own engagements, by promise to the Lord, call upon thee to turn and serve him. Thou hast bound thyself to him by a baptismal covenant, to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil. This thou hast confirmed by the profession of Christianity, and renewed it at sacraments, or in time of affliction; and wilt thou promise and vow, and never perform and turn to God?

Lay all these together now. The Holy Scripture calls upon thee to *turn*: the Spirit cries, *Turn*: thy *conscience* cries, *Turn*: the whole world, and all the creatures therein, cry, *Turn*: the patient *fornication* of God cries, *Turn*: all the *mercies* thou receivest cry, *Turn*: the rod of God's *chastisement* cries, *Turn*: and so do all thy *promises* to God: and yet art thou not resolved to turn?

Moreover, poor hard-hearted sinner! didst thou ever consider upon what terms thou standest all this while with *Him* who calls on thee to *turn*: thou art his *own*, and owest him thyself, and all thou hast; and may he not command his *own*? Thou art his absolute servant, and

shouldest serve no other master. Thou standest at his *mercy*, and thy life is in his hand ; and he is resolved to save thee upon no other terms : thou hast many malicious, spiritual enemies, who would be glad if God would but forsake thee, and let them alone with thee, and leave thee to their will : how quickly would they deal with thee in another manner ! And thou canst not be delivered from them, but by turning unto God. Thou art fallen under his wrath by thy sin already ; and thou knowest not how long his patience will yet wait. Perhaps this is the last year : perhaps the last day. His sword is even at thy heart while the word is in thine ear ; and if thou turn not, thou art a dead man. Were thy eyes but open to see where thou standest, even upon the brink of hell, and to see how many thousands are *there* already, thou wouldest see that it is time to look about thee.

O what glad tidings would it be to those that are now in hell, if they had but such a message from God ! What a joyful word would it be to hear this, *Turn and live !* Yea, what a welcome word would it be to thyself, if thou hadst felt that wrath of God but an hour ! Or, if after a thousand years' torment, thou couldest but hear such a word from God, *Turn and live !* And yet wilt thou now neglect it, and suffer us to return without our errand ?

Behold, sinners, we are sent here as the messengers of the Lord, to set before you life and death : what say you ? which of them will you choose ? Christ stands as it were by thee, with

heaven in one hand, and hell in the other, and offers thee thy choice ; which wilt thou choose ? *The voice of the Lord maketh the rocks to tremble.* But it is nothing to hear him threaten thee, if thou wilt not turn. Dost thou not understand and feelt his voice, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* Why it is the voice of *love*, of *infinite love*, of thy best and kindest friend ; and yet canst thou neglect it ? It is the voice of pity and compassion. The Lord sees whither thou art going better than thou dost, which makes him call after thee, *Turn, turn* : he sees what will become of thee if thou turn not : he thinks with himself, " Ah, this poor sinner will cast himself into endless torments if he do not turn : I must in justice deal with him according to my righteous law ;" and therefore he calls after thee, *Turn, turn, O sinner !* If thou did but know the thousandth part, as well as God does, of the danger that is near you, and the misery you are running into, we should have no more need to call after you to turn.

Well, are you yet resolved, or are you not ? Do I need to say any more to you ? What will you do ? Will you turn or not ? Speak, man, in thy heart to God. Speak, lest he take thy silence for denial ; speak *quickly*, lest he never make thee the like offer more. Speak *resolvedly*, and not waveringly ; for he will have no *indifferents* to be his followers. Say in thy heart now without any more delay, even before thou stir hence, " By the grace of God I am resolved presently to turn. And because I know mine

own insufficiency, I am resolved to wait on God for his grace, and to follow him in his ways, and forsake my former companions, and give up myself to the guidance of the Lord."

DOCTRINE VI.

The Lord condescends to reason the case with unconverted sinners, and to ask them why they will die.

A STRANGE disputation it is, both as to the controversy, and as to the disputants.

1. The controversy or question propounded, *Why wicked men will damn themselves?* Or, *Why they will rather die than turn?* Whether they have any sufficient reason for so doing?

2. The disputants are *God and man;* the most *holy God,* and *wicked, unconverted sinners.*

Is it not a strange thing that any man should be *willing to die*, and be damned? Yea, that this should be the case of the greatest part of the world? But you will say, *This cannot be, for nature desires the preservation of itself.*

I answer, 1. It is a certain truth that no man can will any evil, as evil, but only as it has some appearance of good. Misery, as such, is desired by none. 2. But yet it is most true, that the cause why the wicked die, and are damned, is because *they will die and be damned,* And this is true in several respects:—

1. They will go the way that leads to hell; though they are told by God and man whither it leads; and though God has so often professed

in his word, that if they hold on in that way, they shall be condemned ; and that they shall not be saved unless they turn. They have the word and the oath of the living God for it, that if they will not turn, they shall not enter into his rest. And yet wicked they are, and wicked they will be, let God and man say what they will. So that *consequently* these men are willing to be damned, though not directly : they choose the way to hell and love the certain cause of their torments : though they do not will hell itself, and do not love the pain which they must endure.

Is not this the truth of your case ? You would not burn in hell, but you will cast yourselves into it. You would not be tormented with devils for ever, but you will do that which will certainly procure it. It is as if you would say, "I will drink this ratsbane ; but I will not die. I will cast myself headlong from the top of a steeple, but yet I will not kill myself. I will thrust this knife into my heart, but I will not take away my life." Just so it is with wicked men ; they will be wicked, and yet they would not be damned. But do you not know that God has by his righteous law concluded that you must repent or perish ? He that will take poison, may as well say plainly, *I will kill myself* ; for it will prove no better in the end ; though perhaps he loved it for the sweetness of the sugar that was mixed with it, and would not be persuaded that it was poison ; but it is not his conceit and confidence that will save his life. So if you will be drunk-

ards, or fornicators, or worldlings, or live after the flesh, you may as well say plainly, *We will be damned*: for so you shall be unless you turn. Would you not rebuke the folly of a thief, or murderer, that would say, *I will steal or kill, but I will not be hanged*, when he knows that if he do the one, the judge will see that the other be done! If he say, "I will steal and murder," he may as well say plainly, "I will be hanged ;" and if you will go on in a carnal life, you may as well plainly say, "We will go to hell."

2. Moreover, *The wicked will not use those means without which there is no hope of their salvation*. He that will not eat, may as well say plainly he will not live, unless he can tell how to live without meat. He that will not go his journey, may as well say plainly he will not come to the end of it. He that falls into the water, and will not come out, nor suffer another to help him out, may as well say plainly he will be drowned. So if you be ungodly, and will not be converted, or use the *means* by which you should be converted, you may as well say plainly you will be damned. For if you have found out a way to be saved without conversion, you have done that which was never done before.

So that you may see on what ground it is that God supposes that the wicked will their own destruction : they will not turn, though they must turn or die ; they will rather venture on certain misery than be converted ; and then to

quit themselves in their sins, they make themselves believe that they shall nevertheless escape.

3. And as this *controversy* is matter of wonder, so are the *disputants* too. That God should stoop so low, as thus to plead the case with man ; and that men should be so strangely blind, and obstinate, as to need all this in so plain a case, yea, and to resist all this, when their own salvation lies upon the issue.

No wonder, if they will not hear *us*, who are men, when they will not hear the Lord himself : as God says, Ezek. iii, 7, when he sent the prophet to the Israelites, *The house of Israel will not hearken unto thee ; for they will not hearken unto me ; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.* But, *Wo unto him (saith the Lord) that striveth with his Maker ! Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of the earth ; shall the clay say to him that fashioneth it, What makest thou ?* Isaiah xiv, 9.

USE.

WHAT sayest thou, unconverted wretch ? Darest thou venture upon a dispute with God ? Art thou able to confute him ? Art thou ready to enter the lists ? God asks thee, Why wilt thou die ? Art thou furnished with a sufficient answer ? Wilt thou undertake to prove that God is mistaken ? O what an undertaking is that ! Why, either he or you is mistaken, when he is for your conversion, and you are against

it ; he calls upon you to turn, and you will not ; he bids you to do it presently, even to-day, while it is called to-day, and you delay, and think it time enough hereafter. He says it must be a total change, and you must be holy and new creatures ; and you think it is enough to patch up the old man, without becoming new. Who is in the right way now ? God or you ? God calls on you to turn and to live a holy life, and you will not ; by your disobedient lives, it appears *you will not*. If you will, why do you not ? Why have you not done it all this while ? And why do you not fall upon it yet ? Your wills have the command of your lives. We may certainly conclude that you are unwilling to turn, when you do not turn. And *why will you not* ? Can you give any reason for it, that is worthy to be called a reason ?

It can be no good reason which is against the God of truth. That cannot be light which is contrary to the sun. There is no knowledge in any creature, but what it had from God ; and therefore none can be wiser than God. It were damnable presumption for the highest angel to compare with his Creator : what is it then for a lump of dirt, for an ignorant sot, that knows not himself nor his own soul, that knows but little of the things which he sees, to set himself against the wisdom of the Lord ? It is one of the fullest discoveries of the horrible wickedness, and the stark madness of sinners, that so silly a mole dare contradict his Maker, and call in question the word of God.

And as I know that God must needs be in the right, so I know the case is so palpable which he pleads against, that no man can have reason for it. Is it possible that a man can have any reason to break his Maker's law? Reason to dishonour the Lord of glory? Reason to abuse the Lord that bought him? Is it possible that a man can have any good reason to damn his own immortal soul? Mark the Lord's question, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* Is eternal death a thing to be desired? Are you in love with hell? What reason have you wilfully to perish? If you think you have some reason to sin, should you not remember that *death is the wages of sin?* And think whether you have any reason to undo yourselves body and soul for ever. You should not only ask whether you love the adder, but whether you love the sting? It is such a thing for a man to cast away his everlasting happiness, that no good reason can be given for it: but the more any one pleads for it, the madder he shows himself to be. Had you a lordship or a kingdom offered you for every sin you commit, it were not reason but madness to accept it. Could you by every sin obtain the highest thing on earth that flesh desires, it were of no considerable value to persuade you to commit it. If it were to please your greatest or dearest friends, or to obey the greatest prince on earth, or to save your lives, or to escape the greatest earthly misery; all these are of no consideration, to draw a man to the committing of one sin. If it were a right

hand, or a right eye, that would hinder your salvation, it is the gainfulest way to cut it off or pluck it out. For there is no saving a part, when you lose the whole. So exceeding great are the matters of eternity, that nothing in this world deserves to be named in comparison with them ; nor can any earthly thing, though it were life, or crowns, or kingdoms, be a reasonable excuse for the neglect of matters of everlasting consequence. Heaven is such a thing, that if you lose it, nothing can supply the want, or make up your loss ; and hell is such a thing, that if you suffer it, nothing can remove your misery, or give you ease and comfort. And therefore nothing can be a valuable consideration to excuse you for neglecting your own salvation. *What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul ?*

O that you did but know what matters they are which we are now speaking of ! There is not a soul in hell but knows by this time that it was a mad exchange to let go heaven for fleshly pleasure, and that it is not a little mirth or pleasure, or worldly riches, or honour, that will make him a gainer that loses his soul.

If you see a man put his hand into the fire till it burn off, you will marvel at it ; but this is a thing which a man may have reason for ; as Bishop *Cranmer* had, when he burnt off his hand for subscribing to popery. If you see a man cut off a leg or an arm, it is a sad sight ; but this is a thing that a man may have good reason for, as many a man does to save his life.

If you see a man give his body to be burnt to ashes, and refuse deliverance when it is offered, this is a hard case to flesh and blood : but this a man may have good reason for, as many hundred martyrs have done. But for a man to run into the fire of hell ; this is a thing which can have no reason in the world to justify it. For heaven will pay for the loss of any thing we can lose to get it, or for any labour which we bestow for it. But nothing can pay for the loss of heaven.

I beseech you now let this word come nearer to your hearts. As you are convinced that you have no reason to destroy yourselves, tell me what reason you have to refuse to turn and live to God ? What reason has the most ignorant, careless sinner of you all, why he should not be as careful for his soul as any other ? Will not hell be as hot to *you* as to *others* ? Should not your *own* souls be as *dear* to *you*, as *theirs* to *them* ? Has not God as much authority over *you* ? Why then will you not become a sanctified people as well as they ?

And now, either you *have* reason for what you do, or you *have not*. If *not*, will you go on against reason itself ? But if you think you have, reason the case a little with me, your fellow creature, which is far easier than to reason the case with God. Tell me, man, here before the Lord, as if thou wert to die this hour, why shouldst thou not resolve to turn this day, before thou stir from the place thou standest in ? What reason hast thou to deny, or to delay ?

Hast thou any reason that satisfies thine *own conscience* for it? Or any that thou darest plead at the bar of God? If thou hast, let us hear them, bring them forth. But alas, what nonsense, instead of reasons, do we daily hear from ungodly men?

1. One says, *If none shall be saved, but such sanctified ones as you talk of, heaven will be but empty: God help a great many.*

What! it seems you think that God does not know, or else that he is not to be believed!—Measure not all by yourselves: God has thousands and millions of his sanctified ones; but yet they are few in comparison of the world. It better becomes you to make that use of this truth which Christ teaches you: “Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it; but wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereat.”

Object. 2. *I am sure if such as I go to hell, we shall have store of company.*

Ans. And will that be any ease or comfort to you? Or do you think that you may not have company enough in heaven? Will you be undone for company? or will you not believe that God will execute his threatenings, because there are so many that are guilty?

Object. 3. *But I am no whoremonger, nor drunkard, nor oppressor; and therefore why should you call upon me to be converted?*

Ans. As if you were not *born after the flesh*, and had not lived after the flesh, as well as others ! Is it not as great a sin as any of these, for a man to have an earthly mind, and to love the world above God, and to have an unbelieving, unhumbled heart ? Nay, let me tell you more ; many persons who avoid disgraceful sins, are as fast glued to the world, and as much slaves to the flesh, and as great strangers to God, and averse to heaven, as others are in their more shameful notorious sins.

Object. 4. *But I mean nobody any harm, nor do any harm ; and why then should God condemn me ?*

Ans. Is it no harm to neglect the Lord that made thee, and the work for which thou camest into the world, and to prefer the creature before the Creator, and to neglect grace which is daily offered thee ? It is the depth of thy sinfulness to be so insensible of it : the dead feel not that they are dead. If once thou wert alive, thou wouldest see enough amiss in thyself, and marvel at thyself for making so light of it.

Object. 5. *I think you would make men mad, under pretence of converting them.*

Ans. 1. Can you be madder than you are already ? Or, at least, can there be a more dangerous madness than to neglect your everlasting welfare, and wilfully undo yourselves ?

A man is never well in his wits till he be converted ; he never knows God, nor knows sin, nor knows Christ, nor knows the world, nor himself, nor what his business is on earth,

so as to set himself about it. Is it a wise world, when men will run into hell for fear of being out of their wits ?

2. What is there in the work which Christ calls you to, that should drive a man out of his senses ? Is it the loving God, and calling upon him, and thinking of the glory to come, and the forsaking your sins, and loving one another, and delighting ourselves in the service of God ? Are these such things as make men mad ?

3. And whereas you say that these matters are too high for us ;—are the matters which we are *made for*, and which we *live for*, *too high* for us to meddle with ? This is plainly to unman us, and to make beasts of us, as if we were like them that must meddle with no higher matters than what belong to flesh and earth. If heaven be too high for you to think on, it will be too high for you ever to possess.

4. If God should sometimes suffer any weak-headed persons to be distracted by eternal things, this is because they misunderstand them, and run without a guide. But of the two, I had rather be in the case of such a one, than in that of the mad unconverted world, who take their distraction to be their wisdom.

Object. 6. I do not see that it goes any better with these that are so godly, than with other men. They are as poor, and in as much trouble, as others.

Ans. And perhaps in much more, when God sees it meet. They take not earthly prosperity for their wages. They have laid up their trea-

sure in another world, or else they are not Christians. The less they *have*, the more is *behind*; and they are content to wait till then.

Object. 7. *When you have said all that you can, I am resolved to hope well, and trust in God, and do as well as I can, and not make so much ado.*

Ans. 1. Is that *doing as well as you can*, when you will not turn to God, but your heart is against his holy service? It is as well as you *will* indeed: but that is your misery.

2. My desire is that you should hope in God: but for what is it that you will hope? Is it to be saved, if you turn and be sanctified? For this you have God's promise; and therefore hope for it, and spare not. But if you hope to be saved without conversion, this is not to hope in God, but in Satan. For God has given you no such promise, but told you the contrary: but it is Satan that made you such promises, and raised you to such hopes.

What say you, unconverted sinners? Have you any good reason to give, why you should not turn, and presently turn with all your hearts? Or will you go to hell, in despite of reason itself? Consider what you do in time, for it will shortly be too late to consider. Can you find any fault with God, or his work, or wages? Is he a bad Master? Is the devil, whom you serve, a better? Is there any harm in a holy life? Is a life of ungodliness better? Do you think in your conscience, that it would do you any harm to be converted, and live a holy

life ? What harm *can* it do you ? Is it harm to you to have the Spirit of Christ within you, and to have a purified heart ? Is it *evil* to be like God ? Is it not said that *God made man in his image* ? Why this *holiness* is his *image* ; this *Adam* lost, and this Christ by his word and Spirit would restore to you, as he does to all that will be saved. Tell me truly, as before the Lord ; though you are loath to live a holy life, had you not rather *die* in the case of those that do so, than of others ? If you were to die this day, had you not rather die in the case of a converted man, than of the unconverted ? Of a holy, heavenly man, than of a carnal and earthly man ? And would you not say as *Balaam*, Numb. xxiii, 10, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his* ? And why will you not now be of the mind which you will be of then ? *First* or *last* you must come to this, either to be converted, or to wish you had been, when it is too late.

But what is it that you are afraid of losing if you turn ? Is it your *friends* ? You will but *change* them. *God* will be your *friend*, and *Christ* and the *Spirit* will be your *friend*, and every Christian will be your *friend*. You will get *one friend* that will stand you in more stead than all the friends in the world would have done. The friends you *lose* would but have enticed you to hell, but could not have delivered you ; but the friend you *get*, will save you from hell, and bring you to eternal rest.

Is it your *pleasure* that you are afraid of

losing ? You think you shall never have a merry day again if once you be converted. Alas ! that you should think it a greater pleasure to live in foolish sports and merriments, than live in the love of God, and in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. If it be a greater pleasure to you to think of your lands and inheritance, (if you were lord of all the country,) than it is for a child to play for pins ; why should it not be a greater joy to think of the kingdom of heaven being yours, than of all the riches or pleasures of the world ? I have had myself but a little taste of the heavenly pleasures in the forethoughts of the blessed day, and in the present persuasion of the love of God in Christ ; but I have taken too deep a draught of earthly pleasures ; and yet I must profess from that little experience, that there is no comparison : there is more joy to be had in a day, (if the Sun of life shine clear upon us,) in the state of holiness, than in a whole life of sinful pleasures. It is but your unsanctified nature that makes a holy life seem grievous to you. If you will but turn, the Holy Ghost will give you another *nature*, and then it will be more pleasant to you to be *rid* of your sin, than now it is to *keep* it ; and you will then say, that you knew not what a comfortable life was, till now, and that it was never well with you till God and holiness were your delight.

DOCTRINE VII.

If after all this, men will not turn, it is not the fault of God that they are condemned, but of themselves, even their own wilfulness. They die, because they will die, that is, because they will not turn.

If you will go to hell, what remedy ? God here acquits himself of your blood ; it shall not lie on him if you be lost. A negligent minister may draw it upon *himself* ; and those that encourage you, or hinder you not in sin, may draw it upon *themselves* ; but be sure of it, it shall not lie upon God. The Lord says, concerning his unprofitable vineyard, Isa. v, 3, 4, *Judge I pray between me and my vineyard. What could have been done to my vineyard that I have not done in it ? What could he have done more ? He has made you men, and endued you with reason ; he has furnished you with all external necessities, all creatures are at your service ; he has given you a righteous, perfect law. When you had broken it and undone yourselves, he had pity on you, and sent his Son by a miracle of descending mercy, to die for you, and be a sacrifice for your sins, and he was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.* The Lord Jesus has made you a deed of gift of himself, and eternal life with him, on the condition you will but accept it and return. He has on this reasonable condition offered you the free pardon of all your sins ; he has written this in his word, and sealed it by his Spirit, and sent it to

you by his ministers : they have made the offer to you a hundred, and a hundred times, and called you to accept it and turn to God. They have in his name entreated you, and reasoned the case with you, and answered all your frivolous objections. He has long waited on you, and stayed your leisure, and suffered you to abuse him to his face. He has mercifully sustained you in the midst of your sins ; he has compassed you about with all sorts of mercies ; he has also intermixed afflictions to remind you of your folly, and call you to your senses : and his Spirit has been often striving with your hearts and saying, “ Turn, sinner, turn to him that calls thee : Whither art thou going ? What art thou doing ? Dost thou know what will be the end ? How long wilt thou hate thy friends and love thine enemies ? When wilt thou let go and turn, and deliver up thyself to God, and give thy Redeemer the possession of thy soul ? when shall it once be ?” These pleadings have been used with thee. And when thou hast delayed thou hast been urged to make haste, and God has called to thee, *Today, while it is called to-day, harden not your heart : why not now, without any more delay ?* Life has been set before you ; the joys of heaven have been opened to you in the Gospel ; the certainty of them has been manifested ; the certainty of the everlasting torments of the damned has been declared to you. Unless you would have had a *sight of heaven and hell*, what could you have desired more ? Christ has been, as it were, set forth crucified before your eyes.

You have been a hundred times told that you are but lost men till you come to him ; as often you have been told of the evil of sin, of the vanity of sin, the world and all the pleasures and wealth it can afford ; of the shortness and uncertainty of your lives, and the endless duration of the joy or torment of the life to come. All this, and more than this, have you been told, and told again ; and though all this has not converted you, yet you are alive, and might have mercy this day, if you had but hearts to entertain it. And now let reason itself be judge, whether it be the fault of God or you, if after all this you will be unconverted and be damned ? If you *die* now, it is because you will die. What could be said more to you ? Or what course can be taken that is likelier to prevail ? Are you able to say, and make it good, “ We would fain have been converted, and become new creatures, but we could not ; we would fain have forsaken our sins, but could not ; we would have changed our company, and our thoughts, and our discourse, but we could not.” Why could you not if you would ? What hindered you but the wickedness of your hearts ? Who *forced* you to sin ? or who held you back from duty ? Did God put in any exceptions against you in his word, when he invited sinners to return ; and when he promised mercy to those who do return ? Did he say, *I will pardon all that repent except thee* ? Did he shut you out from the liberty of his holy worship ? Did he forbid you to pray to him any more than others ? You know he did not. God did not *drive* you

away from him, but you ran away yourselves. And when he called you to him you would not come. If God had excepted you out of the general promise and offer of mercy ; or had said to you, “ Stand off, I will have nothing to do with such as you ; if you repent ever so much, and cry for mercy ever so much, I will not regard you ;” then you had a fair excuse. You might have said, *To what end shall I repent and turn, when it will do no good ?* But this was not your case. You might have had Christ to be your Lord and Saviour, your Head and Husband, as well as others, and you *would not*, because you felt not yourself sick enough for the physician ; and because you could not spare your disease : in your heart you said as those rebels, Luke xix, 14, *We will not have this man to reign over us.* Christ *would have gathered you under the wings of his salvation, and you would not.* What desires of your welfare did the Lord express in his holy word ? With what compassion did he stand over you and say, “ O that my people had hearkened unto me, and that they had walked in my ways ! O that there were such a heart in this people, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever ! O that they were wise, that they understood this, and that they would consider their latter end ! ” He would have been your God, and done all for you that your souls could desire : but you loved the world and your flesh above him, and therefore you would *not hearken* to him : though you

complimented him and gave him high titles, yet when it came to the closing, *you would have none of him*. No marvel then, if *he gave you up to your own heart's lusts, and you walked in your own counsels*. He condescends to reason, and pleads the case with you, and asks you, “What is there in me or my service, that you should be so much against me? What harm have I done thee, sinner? Have I deserved this unkind dealing at thy hand? many mercies have I showed thee: for which of them dost thou thus despise me? Is it I, or is it Satan that is thy enemy? Is it I, or is it thyself that would undo thee? Is it a holy life, or a life of sin, which thou hast cause to fly from? If thou be undone, thou procurest this to thyself, by forsaking me, the Lord that would have saved thee.” “Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is he not thy father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee and established thee?” Deut. xxxii, 6. When he saw that you forsook him even for nothing, and turned away from your Lord, to hunt after the chaff and feathers of the world, he told you of your folly, and called you to a more profitable employment. Isa. lv, 2, 3, “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? Hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear and come unto me: hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” And

when you would not hear, what complaints have you put him to, charging it on you as your wilfulness and stubbornness ! “ Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid ; for my people have committed two evils : they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters ;” and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that will hold no water. Many a time has Christ proclaimed that free invitation to you : Rev. xxii, 17, *Let him that is athirst, come : and whosoever will, let him take the waters of life freely.* But you oblige him to complain after all his offers, *They will not come to me that they may have life,* John v, 40. He has invited you to a feast with him in the kingdom of his grace ; and you have had excuses from your grounds, and your cattle, and your worldly business, and when you *would* not come, you said you *could not* : and provoked him to resolve that you should never *taste of his supper.* And whose fault is it now but your own ? And what can you say is the chief cause of your damnation, but your own *wills* ? you would be damned.

USE.

1. FROM hence you may see, not only what blasphemy and impiety it is to lay the blame of men’s destruction upon God ; but also how unfit these wicked wretches are to bring in such a charge against their Maker. They cry out against God, and say he giveth them not grace, and his threatenings are severe, and God forbid that all should be damned that are not converted :

and they think it hard measure, that a short sin may have an endless suffering : and if they be damned, they say they cannot help it : when in the mean time they are busy about their own destruction, even cutting the throat of their own souls, and will not be persuaded to hold their hands. They think *God* would be *cruel* if he should damn them : and yet they are so *cruel* to *themselves*, that they *will run* into the fire of hell ; when God has told them it is a little before them, and neither entreaties nor threatenings, nor any thing that can be said, will stop them. We see them almost undone : their careless worldly lives tell us that they are in the power of the devil ; we know if they die before they are converted, all the world cannot save them : and knowing the uncertainty of their lives, we are afraid every day lest they fall into the fire. And therefore we entreat them to pity their own souls, and not to undo themselves when mercy is at hand : and they *will not* hear us. We entreat them to cast away their sin, and to come to Christ without delay, and to have some mercy on themselves ; but they will have none. And yet they think that God must be cruel if he condemn them. O wilful, wretched sinners, it is not *God* that is *cruel* to you ; it is *you* that are *cruel* to yourselves. You are told that you must *turn, or burn*, and yet you *turn not*. You are told that if you will keep your sins, you shall keep the curse of God with them : and yet you *will* keep them. You are told that there is no way to *happiness*, but by *holiness*, and yet

you will not be holy. What would you have God to say more to you? What would you have him *do* with his mercy? He offers it you, and you will not have it. You are in the ditch of sin and misery, and he would give you his hand to help you out, and you refuse his help; he would cleanse you from your sins, and you would rather keep them. Would you have him bring you to heaven whether you will or no? Or would you have him bring you and your sins to heaven together? Why that's an impossibility! you may as well expect he should turn the sun into darkness. What! an unsanctified heart be in heaven? It cannot be: there nothing entereth that is unclean, Rev. xxi, 27. "All the day long hath he stretched out his hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people." What will you *do* now? Will you cry to God for mercy? Why, God calls upon *you* to have *mercy* upon yourselves, and you will not. Ministers see the poisoned cup in the drunkard's hand, and tell him, *there is poison in it*, and desire him to have *mercy* on his soul, and forbear, and he *will not* hear us: drink it he *must* and *will*: he loves it, and therefore though hell comes next, he says he *cannot help it*. What should one say to such men as these? We tell the ungodly, "It is not such a life that will serve the turn, or ever bring you to heaven. If a bear was at your back, you would mend your pace; and when the curse of God is at your back, and Satan and hell are at your back, will you not stir, but ask, What needs all this ado? Is an immortal soul of no more

worth ? O have mercy upon yourselves !” But they will have no mercy upon themselves. We tell them, the end will be bitter. Who can dwell with everlasting fire ? And yet they will have no mercy upon themselves. And will these shameless wretches say that God is more merciful than to condemn them, when it is themselves that cruelly *run* upon condemnation, and we cannot stop them ? If we fall down on our knees to them, we cannot stop them ; but to hell they *will go*, and yet will not believe that they are going thither. If we beg of them for the sake of God that made them, and preserves them ; for the sake of Christ who died for them ; for the sake of their own poor souls, to pity themselves, and go no farther in the way to hell, but come to Christ while his arms are open, and enter into life while the door stands open, and now take mercy while mercy may be had ; they *will not* be persuaded. And yet they say *I hope God will be merciful.* Did you never consider what he says, Isa. xxvii, 11 ? “It is a people of no understanding : therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them ; and he that formed them will show them no favour.”

If another man will not clothe you when you are naked, and feed you when you are hungry, you will say he is unmerciful. If he should cast you into prison, and beat and torment you, you would say he is unmerciful. And yet you will do a thousand times more against yourselves, even cast away both soul and body for ever, and never complain of your own unmer-

cifulness. Yea, and God, who waited upon you all the while with his mercy, must be taken to be unmerciful, if he punish you for all this. Unless the holy God of heaven will give these wretches liberty to trample upon his Son's blood, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, and set more lightly by saving mercy, than by the filth of their fleshly pleasures ; and unless after this he will save them by the mercy which they cast away, God himself must be called unmerciful. But he will be justified when he judgeth ; and he will not stand or fall at the bar of a sinful worm.

2. From hence you may observe, 1. What a subtle tempter Satan is. 2. What a deceitful thing sin is. 3. What a foolish creature corrupted man is. *A subtle tempter indeed*, that can persuade the greatest part of the world to go wilfully into everlasting fire, when they have so many warnings and dissuasives. *A deceitful thing is sin indeed*, that can bewitch so many thousands to part with everlasting life, for a thing so base, and utterly unworthy ! *A foolish creature* is man that will be cheated out of his salvation for nothing ; yea, for a *known nothing* : and that by an enemy, and a known enemy. You would think it impossible that any man should be persuaded for a little to cast himself into the fire, or water, to the destruction of this life : and yet men will be enticed to cast themselves into hell. If your natural lives were in your own hands, so that you should not die till you should kill yourselves, how long would

most of you live ? and yet when your everlasting life is so far in your own hands, under God, that you cannot be undone till you undo yourselves, how few of you will forbear your own undoing ! Ah ! what a silly thing is man ! and what a bewitching and befooling thing is sin !

Lastly : You may hence learn, that the greatest enemy to man is himself ; and the greatest judgment in this life that can befall him, is to be left to himself, and that the great work which grace has to do, is to save us from ourselves ; and the greatest complaints of men should be against themselves ; and the greatest work that we have to do ourselves, is to resist ourselves ; and the greatest enemy which we should daily pray, and watch, and strive against, is our own hearts and wills ; and the greatest part of your work, if you will do good to others and help them to heaven, is to save them from themselves, even from their own blind understandings and corrupted wills, and perverse affections, and violent passions, and unruly senses : I only name all these for brevity's sake, and leave them to your farther consideration.

Well, now we have found out the great murderer of souls, (even men's selves, their own wills,) what remains but that you confess this great iniquity before the Lord, and be humbled for it, and do so no more. To these three ends distinctly, I shall add a few words more.—
1. Farther to convince you. 2. To humble you. And, 3. To reform you.

1. We know so much of the exceeding gra-

cious nature of God, who is willing to do good, and delights to show mercy, that we have no reason to suspect *him* of being the cause of our death, or to call him cruel. He made all good, and he preserves and maintains all : the eyes of all things wait upon him, and he gives them their meat in due season ; he opens his hand, and satisfies the desires of all the living. He is not only *righteous in all his ways*, (and therefore will deal justly,) and *holy in all his works*, (and therefore not the author of sin,) but *he is also good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.*

But as for *man*, we know his mind is dark, his will is perverse, his affections carry him so headlong, that he is fitted by his folly and corruption to such a work as the destroying of himself. “ Let no man say when he is tempted, that he is tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, (*to draw him to sin*,) but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. *Then* when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” You see here that sin is the brat of your own concupiscence, and that death is the offspring of your own sin, and the fruit which it will yield you as soon as it is ripe. You have a treasure of evil in yourselves, as a spider hath of poison, from whence you are bringing forth hurt to yourselves, and spinning such webs as entangle your own souls.

2. It is evident that you are your own destroyers, in that you are so *ready to entertain any temptation* that is offered. Satan is scarce readier to move you to any evil than you are ready to do as he would have you. If he would tempt your understanding to error and prejudice, you yield. If he would hinder you from good resolutions, it is soon done. If he would kindle any vile affection or desire in you, it is soon done : if he would drive you on to evil thoughts or deeds, you are so free, that he needs no spur : if he would keep you from holy thoughts, and words, and ways, a little does it ; you need no curb. You examine not his suggestions, nor resist them with any resolution, nor cast them out as he casts them in, nor quench the sparks which he endeavours to kindle ; but set in with him, and meet him half way, and embrace his motions, and tempt him to tempt you.

3. Your destruction is evidently owing to yourselves, in that you resist all who would help to save you. God would help and save you by his word, and you resist it ; it is too strict for you. He would sanctify you by his *Spirit*, but you resist and quench it. If any man reprove you for your sin, you fly in his face ; if he tell you of your danger, you give him little thanks ; but either bid him look to himself, or at best put him off with heartless thanks.

4. Moreover, it is apparent that you are self-destroyers, in that you *draw the matter of you-*

sin and destruction even from the blessed God himself. You like not the contrivances of his wisdom : you like not his justice, but take it for cruelty : you like not his holiness, but are ready to think he is such a one as yourselves, Psa. i, 21, and makes as light of sin as you : you like not his truth, but would have his threatenings, even his peremptory threatenings, prove false. And his goodness, which you seem most highly to approve, you partly resist, as it would lead you to repentance ; and partly abuse, to the strengthening of your sin, as if you might the more freely sin, because God is merciful.

5. Yea, you *fetch destruction from the blessed Redeemer, and death from the Lord of life himself.* Nothing more emboldens you in sin, than that Christ has died for you ; as if now the danger of death were over, and you might boldly venture : as if Christ were become a servant to Satan, and must wait upon you while you are abusing him. And because he is become the Physician of souls, and is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him, you think he must save you whether you will come to God by him or not. So that a great part of your sins are occasioned by your bold presumption upon the death of Christ.

6. He gives many blessings to you as the tokens of his love and furniture for his service, and you turn them against him to the pleasing of your flesh. You eat and drink to please your appetite, and not for the glory of God. Your clothes you abuse to pride. Your riches

draw your hearts from heaven. Your honours and applause puff you up. If you have health and strength, it makes you more secure. Yea, other men's mercies are abused by you to your hurt. If you see their honours and dignity, you are provoked to envy them. If you see their riches, you are ready to covet them. If you look upon beauty, you are stirred up to lust. And it is well if godliness be not an eye-sore to you.

7. *The very gifts which God bestows on you, and the ordinances of grace, you turn to sin. If you have better parts than others, you grow proud and self-conceited. You take the bare hearing of your duty for so good a work, as will excuse you from not obeying it. Your prayers are turned into sin, because you regard iniquity in your hearts, Psalm lxvi, 18, and depart not from iniquity when you call on the name of the Lord. Your prayers are abominable, because you turn away your ear from hearing the law, Prov. xxviii, 9; and are more ready to offer the sacrifice of fools, (thinking you do God some special service,) than to hear his word, and obey it, Eccles. v, 1.*

And thus I might show you in many other cases, how you turn all that comes near you to your own destruction; so clear is it that the ungodly are self-destroyers, and that their perdition is of themselves.

Methinks, now, upon the consideration of what is said, and the review of your own ways, you should consider what you have done, and

be ashamed and deeply humbled. If you be not, I pray you consider these following truths.

1. To be your own destroyers, is to sin against the deepest principle in your natures, even the principle of self-preservation. Every thing naturally desires its own welfare or perfection. And will you set yourselves to your own destruction ? When you are commanded to love your neighbours as yourselves, it is supposed that you naturally love yourselves : but if you love your neighbours better than yourselves, it seems you would have all the world damned.

2. How extremely do you cross your own intentions ? I know you intend not your own damnation, even when you are procuring it ; you think you are but doing good to yourselves, by gratifying the desires of your flesh. But alas ! it is as a draught of cold water in a burning fever, which increases the disease. If indeed you would have pleasure, profit, or honour, seek them where they are to be found, not in the way to hell.

3. What pity is it that you should do that against yourselves, which none else in earth or hell can do. If all the world were combined against you, or all the devils in hell, they could not destroy you without yourselves. And will you do that against yourselves, which no one else can do ? You have hateful thoughts of the devil, because he is your enemy, and endeavours your destruction. And will you be worse than devils to yourselves ? But thus it is with you when you run into sin, and refuse to turn

at the call of God ; you do more against your own souls, than men or devils could do beside. And if you should set yourselves to do yourselves the greatest mischief, you could not devise a greater.

4. It will everlastingly make you your own tormentors in hell, to think that you brought yourselves wilfully to that misery. O what a griping thought it will be to think with yourselves, that this was your own doing ! That you were warned of this day, and warned again, but it would not do : that you wilfully sinned, and wilfully turned away from God : you had time as well as others, but you abused it : you had teachers as well as others, but you refused their instructions : you had holy examples, but you did not imitate them : you were offered Christ, and grace, and glory, as well as others, but you preferred your fleshly pleasure : you had a price in your hands, but you had not a heart to lay it out. Can it choose but torment you to think of this your folly ? O that your eyes were opened to see what you have done in the wilful wronging of your own souls ! and that you better understood these words of God, Prov. viii, 33, 34, 35, 36, " Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain the favour of the Lord. But he that sinneth against me, wrangeth his own soul : all they that hate me, love death."

CONCLUSION.

AND now I am come to the conclusion of this work, my heart is troubled to think how I shall leave you ; lest, after this, the flesh should still deceive you, and the world and the devil should keep you asleep, and I should leave you as I found you, till you awake in hell. Dear friends ! I am so loath you should lie in everlasting fire, that I once more ask you what you resolve on ? Will you turn, or die ? As far as you are gone in sin, do but now turn, and come to Christ, and your souls shall live. If it were your bodies which we had to deal with, we might know what to do for you. Though you would not consent, you might be held or bound, while the medicine was poured down your throats, and hurtful things might be kept from you. But about your souls it cannot be so : we cannot convert you against your wills. There is no carrying madmen to heaven in fetters. *You may be condemned against your wills*, because you *sinned with your wills* ; but you cannot be *saved against your wills*. The wisdom of God has thought meet to lay man's salvation or destruction exceeding much upon the choice of his own will : that no man shall go to heaven who chooses not the way to heaven ; and no man shall go to hell, but shall be forced to say, *I have the thing I chose ; my own will did bring me here*. Now if I could but get you to be willing, to be *thoroughly* and *resolutely willing*, the work were more than

half done. And alas ! must we lose our *friends*, and must they lose their *God*, their *happiness*, their *souls*, for want of this ? I do again beseech you, as if it were on my bended knees, that you would hearken to your Redeemer, and *turn*, *that you may live*. All you that have lived in ignorance, carelessness, and presumption, to this day : all you that have been drowned in the cares of the world, and have no desire after God and eternal glory : all you that are enslaved to your fleshly desires, of meats and drinks, sports and lusts : and all you that know not the necessity of holiness, and never were acquainted with the sanctifying work of the Holy Ghost upon your souls ; that never embraced your blessed Redeemer by a living faith, and with admiring and thankful apprehensions of his love, and that never felt a higher estimation of God and heaven, and a heartier love to them, than to the things below : I earnestly beseech you, not only for my sake, but for the Lord's sake, and for your souls' sake, that you go not one day longer in your present condition ; but look about you, and cry to God for converting grace that you may escape the plagues which are before you. Deny me any thing that ever I shall ask you for myself, if you will but grant me this. Nay, as ever as you will do any thing at the request of the Lord that made you and redeemed you, deny him not this ; for if you deny him this, he cares for nothing that you shall grant him. As ever you would have how hear your prayers, and grant your requests ;

and bless you at the hour of death, and day of judgment, deny not his request now in the day of your prosperity. O believe it, death and judgment, and heaven and hell, are other matters when you come near them, than they seem afar off.

Well, I hope that some of you are by this time purposing to turn and live: and that you are ready to ask me, as the Jews did Peter, when they were pricked in their hearts, *What shall we do? How may we come to be truly converted? We are willing if we did but know our duty. God forbid that we should choose destruction, by refusing conversion, as hitherto we have done.*

If these be the purposes of your hearts, I say of you as God did of a promising people, Deut. v, 28, 29, "They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such a heart in them that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always!" Your purposes are good: O that there were but a heart in you to perform these purposes! And, in hope thereof, I shall gladly give you direction what to do; and that but briefly, that you may the easier remember it for your practice.

DIRECTION I.

If you would be converted and saved, *labour to understand the necessity and nature of conversion.*

Consider what a lamentable condition you are in till your conversion, that you may see it

is not a state to be rested in. You are under the guilt of all the sins that ever you committed ; and under the wrath of God, and the curse of his law ; you are bound slaves to the devil, and daily employed in his work, against the Lord, yourselves, and others : you are spiritually dead, as being void of the holy life, and nature and image of the Lord. You are unfit for any holy *work*, and do nothing that is truly pleasing to God. You are without any promise or assurance of his protection, and live in continual danger of his justice, not knowing what hour you may be snatched away to hell ; and most certain to be damned if you die in that condition. And nothing short of conversion can prevent it. Whatever amendments are short of true conversion, will never procure the saving of your souls. Keep the true sense of this natural misery, and of the necessity of conversion on our hearts. And then you must understand what it is to be converted : it is to have a new heart, or disposition, and a new conversation.

Quest. For what must we turn ?

Ans. For these ends following, which you may attain ; you shall hereby be made living members of Christ, and have an interest in him, and be renewed after the image of God, quickened with a new and heavenly life, and saved from the tyranny of Satan, and the dominion of sin, and be justified from the curse of the law, and have the pardon of all the sins of your whole lives, and be accepted of God, and made

his sons, and have liberty with boldness to call him Father, and go to him by prayer in all your wants, with a promise of acceptance : you shall have the Holy Ghost to dwell in you, to sanctify and guide you : you shall have part in the communion and prayers of the saints : you shall be fitted for God's service ; and shall have the promise of this life, and that which is to come.

And, at death, your souls shall go to Christ : and at the day of judgment both soul and body shall be justified, and enter into your Master's joy.

All this the poorest beggar of you that is converted shall certainly and endlessly enjoy.

DIRECTON II.

If you will be converted and saved, *be much in secret, serious consideration.* Inconsiderateness undoes the world. Withdraw yourselves often into secrecy, and meditate on the end for which you were made : on the life you have lived, the time you have lost, the sins you have committed ; on the love and sufferings and fulness of Christ ; on the danger you are in, or the nearness of death and judgment ; and on the certainty and excellency of the joys of heaven ; and on the certainty and terror of the torments of hell, and eternity of both ; and on the necessity of conversion and a holy life.

DIRECTION III.

If you will be converted and saved, *attend*

upon the word of God, which is the ordinary means. Read the Scripture, or hear it read, and other holy writings, which do apply it, constantly : and attend on the public preaching of the word. As God will lighten the world by the sun, and not by himself alone without it ; so will he convert and save men by his ministers, who are the lights of the world. When he has miraculously humbled Paul, he sends Ananias to him, Acts ix, 10, and when he has sent an angel to Cornelius, it is but to bid him send for Peter, who must tell him what he is to believe and do.

DIRECTION IV.

BETAKE yourselves to God in a course of earnest, constant prayer. Confess and lament your former lives, and beg his grace to illuminate and convert you. Beseech him to pardon what is past, and to give you his Spirit, and change your hearts and lives ; and lead you in his ways, and save you from temptation.— And ply this work daily, and be not weary of it.

DIRECTION V.

PRESENTLY give over your known and wilful sins. Make a stand, and go that way no farther. Be drunk no more ; but avoid the place and occasion of it. Cast away your lusts and sinful pleasures with detestation.— Curse and swear and rail no more ; and if you have wronged any, restore as Zaccheus did. If you will commit again your old sins, what

blessing can you expect on the means for conversion?

DIRECTION VI.

PRESENTLY, if possible, change your company. Not by forsaking your necessary relations, but your unnecessary and sinful companions ; and *join yourselves with those who fear the Lord.*

DIRECTION VII.

DELIVER up yourselves to the Lord Jesus, as the physician of your souls, that he may pardon you by his blood, and sanctify you by his Spirit, by his word and ministers, the instruments of his Spirit. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life ; there is no coming to the Father but by him, John xiv, 6. Nor is there any other name under heaven, by which you can be saved, Acts iv, 12. Study therefore his person and nature, and what he has done and suffered for you, and what he is to you ; and what he will be ; and how he is fitted to the full supply of all your necessities.

DIRECTION VIII.

If you mean, indeed, to turn and live, do it without delay. If you be not willing to turn to-day, you are not willing to do it at all.—Remember you are all this while in your blood ; under the guilt of many thousand sins, and under God's wrath, and you stand at the very brink of hell ; there is but a step between you and death. And this is not a case for a

man to be quiet in. Up therefore presently, and fly for your lives ; as you would be gone out of your house, if it were all on fire over your head. O if you did but know what danger you live in, and what daily, unspeakable loss you do sustain, and what a safer and sweeter life you might live, you would not stand trifling, but presently turn. Multitudes miscarry who wilfully delay, when they are convinced that it must be done. Your lives are short and uncertain ; and what a case are you in if you die before you thoroughly turn ! You have stayed too long already ; and wronged God too long : sin gets strength and rooting while you delay. Your conversion will grow more hard and doubtful. You have much to do, and therefore put not all off to the last, lest God forsake you, and give you up to yourselves, and then you are undone for ever.

DIRECTION IX.

IF you will turn and live, do it *unreservedly*, *absolutely*, and *universally*. Think not to capitulate with Christ, and divide your heart between him and the world ; and to part with some sins, and keep the rest. This is but self deluding ; you must forsake all you have, or else you cannot be his disciple, Luke xiv, 26, 33. If you will not take God and heaven for your portion, and lay all below at the feet of Christ, but must needs also have your good things here, and have an earthly portion, and God and glory are not enough for you ; it is in

vain to dream of salvation on these terms ; for it *will not be*. If you seem ever so religious, if yet it be but outside righteousness, this is as certain a way to death as open profaneness, though it be plausible.

DIRECTION X.

If you will turn and live, do it *resolvedly*, and stand not still deliberating, as it were a doubtful case. Stand not wavering, as if you were yet uncertain whether God or the flesh be the better master ; or whether heaven or hell be the better end ; or whether sin or holiness be the better way. But away with your former lusts, and presently, habitually, fixedly resolve : be not one day of one mind, and the next of another, but be at a point with all the world, and resolutely give up yourselves, and all you have, to God. Now, while you are reading or hearing this, resolve. Before you sleep another night, resolve. Before you stir from this place, resolve. Before Satan have time to take you off, resolve. You never will turn indeed, till you do resolve ; and that with a firm and unchangeable resolution.

And now I have done my part in this work, that you may turn at the call of God and live. What will become of it, I cannot tell. I have cast the seed at God's command : but it is not in my power to give the increase. I can go no farther with my message ; I cannot bring it to your heart, or make it work : I cannot do *your* parts for *you*, to entertain it : I cannot do

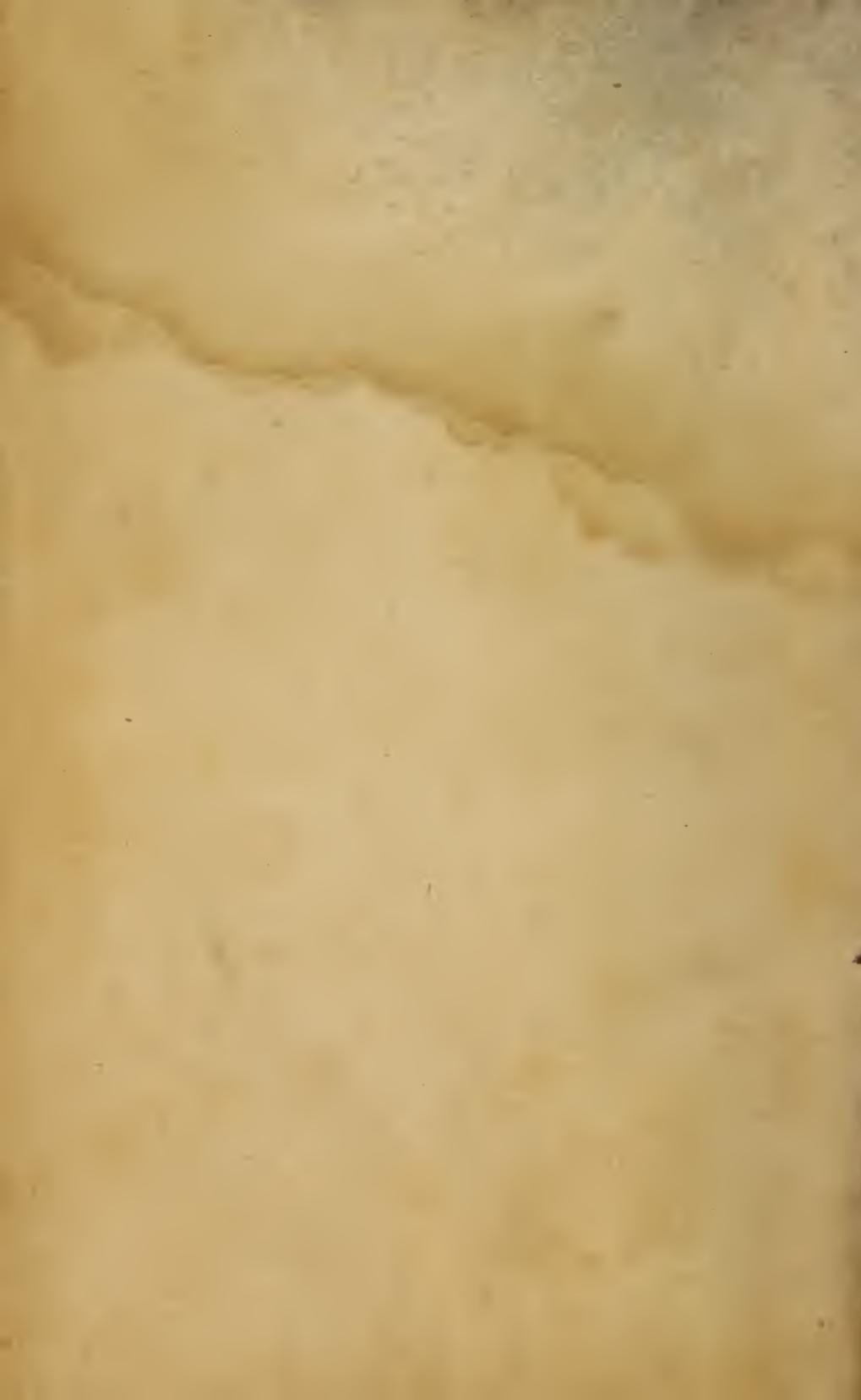
God's part by opening your heart to cause you to entertain it ; nor can I show you heaven or hell to your eyesight, nor give you new and tender hearts.

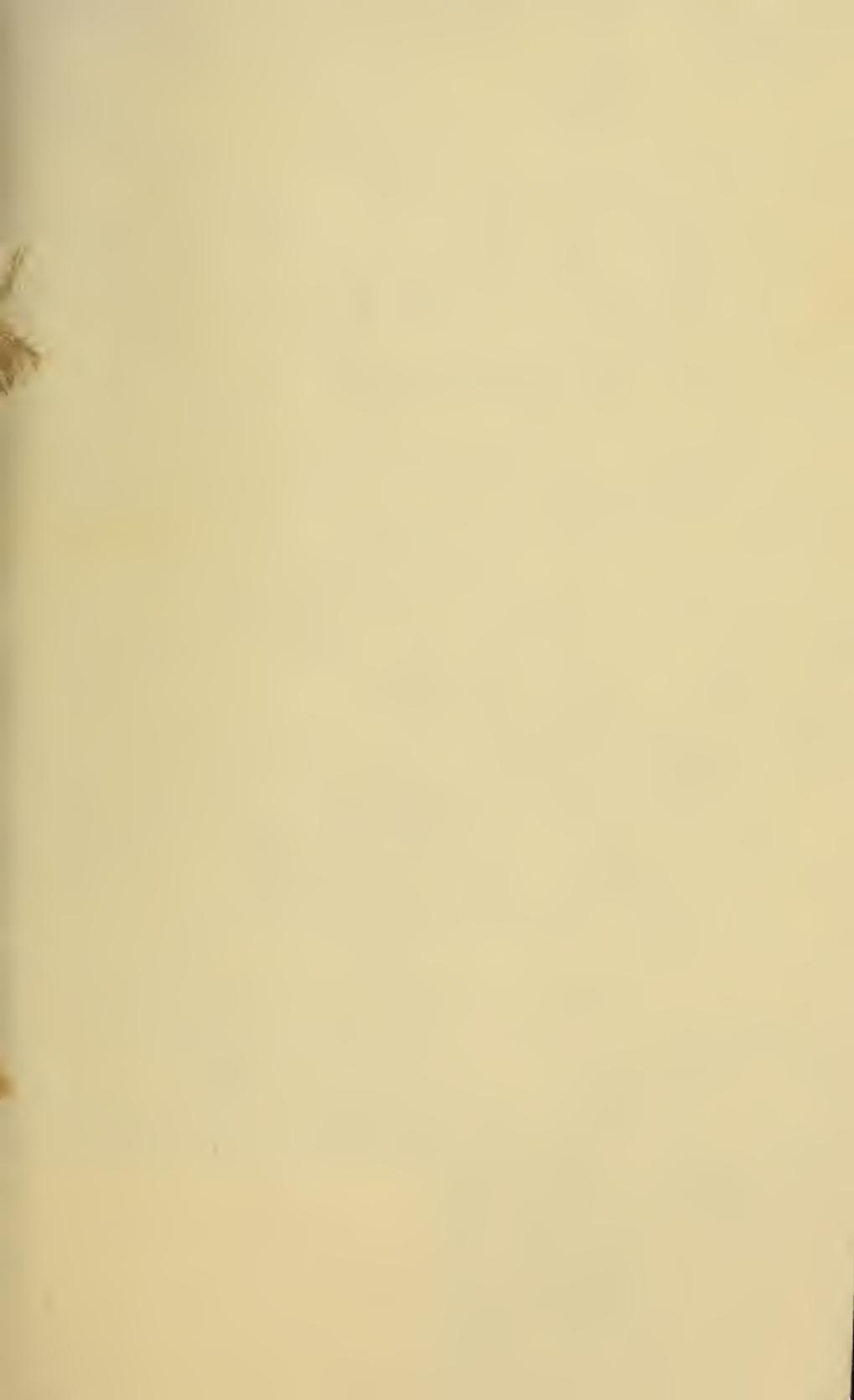
But, O thou that art the gracious Father of spirits, thou hast sworn thou delightest not in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn and live ; deny not thy blessing to these persuasions and directions, and suffer not their enemies to triumph in thy sight, and the great deceiver of souls to prevail against thy Son, thy Spirit, and thy word. O pity poor unconverted sinners, that have no heart to pity or help themselves : command the blind to see, the deaf to hear, and the dead to live, and let not sin and death be able to resist thee. Awake the secure ; resolve the unresolved ; confirm the wavering ; and let the eyes of sinners that read these lines, be next employed in weeping over their sins ; and bring them to themselves and to thy Son, before their sin have brought them to perdition. If thou say but the word, these poor endeavours shall prosper to the winning of many a soul to their everlasting joy, and their everlasting glory. Amen.











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